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\$900,000 Now Available For New Metropolitan Site

PLEDGES of \$900,000 toward the purchase of a \$1,200,000 building site for a new Metropolitan Opera House have been obtained by the opera association. The proposed opera house would be one of a group of civic structures occupying the land between 58th and 60th Streets on the west side of Columbus Circle.

Announcement of the present total of pledges toward the project was made on Jan. 15, which had been designated as the deadline on which the opera association must let Robert Moses, head of the New York City Slum Clearance Committee, know whether the Metropolitan wished to participate in the building enterprise, which envisages the construction of a concert hall, a convention hall, a garage, and apartment buildings in addition to a new opera house. On the basis of the assertion of the Metropolitan management that "prospects are good" for securing the remaining \$300,000, Mr. Moses granted an extension of time before requiring the opera association to make a formal commitment. Opera officials took the position that no such commitment could be undertaken until the full \$1,200,000 was guaranteed.

With the purchase of the land, however, the Metropolitan will merely scratch the surface of a gigantic financial undertaking. At the present level of building costs, it is estimated that at least \$10,000,000, and perhaps as much as \$15,000,000 will be required to construct a modern opera house with suitable equipment and storage space and adequate seating capacity. If plans are drawn up to incorporate one or more concert halls in the opera-house unit, the cost of construction may reach \$25,000,000. Presumably, however, the Metropolitan would be responsible only for the share of the cost involved in the part of the building to be used for operatic presentations.

The \$900,000 in pledges have been obtained wholly through the efforts of members of the Metropolitan board of directors. A single gift accounted for \$500,000, and there was also a \$100,000 donation. The money has come from private sources, described as "individuals interested in the Metropolitan." None of the donors' names has been made public.

The drive for funds, which has been carried on without publicity, was initiated last May, after Mr. Moses proposed that the Metropolitan and Philharmonic-Symphony Society should interest themselves in the possibility of creating a music center on the Columbus Circle site, to be made available by the demolition of the ancient and unsightly buildings that now occupy it. It is not known whether the Philharmonic-Symphony board will ultimately participate in the undertaking, but the co-operation of the Metropolitan will be sufficient to get demolition proceedings under way. The available site consists of 80,000 square feet—the entire area of the two blocks bounded by Columbus Circle, 58th Street, Ninth Avenue, and 60th Street. The civic structures would be erected on the Columbus

Circle frontage, and the apartment buildings on Ninth Avenue. Purchase of the land would be assisted by the 66½ per cent Federal land subsidy provided for slum clearance. The cost to the Metropolitan Opera Association would be \$15 a square foot.

The Metropolitan board is not optimistic about the possibility of finding private donors of \$10,000,000 or more, particularly in view of the constantly increasing tax burden upon those with large incomes. Nevertheless, members of the board are by no means hopeless. They are reasonably convinced that the larger part of the needed sum can be obtained by sizable gifts from corporations and foundations. Gifts up to five per cent by corporations may be deducted from income taxes. Moreover, an increasing number of corporations are coming to feel that they have a deep responsibility to make a cultural investment in the community of which they are a part.

Present plans, it is reported, envisage the solicitation of public utilities, hotels, stores, and clothing manufacturers. In other cities in America and Europe, large-scale cultural enterprises have been found to be a stimulus to business. It is hoped to persuade many local businesses that the music center would enhance their own interests. At best, however, the time required to raise the necessary building fund will undoubtedly be several years.

The present site of the Metropolitan has an estimated value of \$5,000,000, less \$1,100,000 in mortgages. The board does not propose, however, to turn the proceeds of the sale of its present property over to the building fund, for it hopes to retain this money as an endowment fund to help cover the deficits incurred by the operation of the new theatre.

No architectural plans have been drawn up for the proposed opera house on the Columbus Circle site, although sketches and blueprints for the remodeling of the Seventh Avenue side of the present house at 39th Street were drawn up a few years ago, when the opera board surveyed the relative advantage of building a new opera house and remodeling the old one. It is assumed that the new theatre would have a seating capacity considerably larger than the present capacity of 3,465 seats, since the ratio between box-office intake and the cost of operation is unsatisfactory, and must remain so until the opera company has more seats to sell for each performance.

The Philharmonic-Symphony, which has no home of its own and pays rental for the use of Carnegie Hall, may well be persuaded to join in the construction project. Up to now the Metropolitan, for which the financial involvement is considerably larger, has taken the initiative in dealing with Mr. Moses' committee. If the remaining \$300,000 are raised and the go-ahead signal is given for the purchase of the land, the Metropolitan may be expected to confer with the Philharmonic-Symphony board about the possibility of the orchestra's participation.



Serge Le Blanc

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

Backstage at the Metropolitan Opera House, stagehands grin happily during an informal birthday celebration for Rudolf Bing (seated right), general manager of the opera company. The party followed a rehearsal of Gianni Schicchi on Jan. 9, during which the cast and orchestra serenaded Mr. Bing, who was in the auditorium, with a performance of Happy Birthday. Sitting next to the manager is Edward Hauch, master mechanic

La Scala in Milan Opens With I Vespri Siciliani

By NEWELL JENKINS

EACH fall the opening performance at La Scala in Milan is a spectacle arousing keen anticipation and, to a certain extent, rivalry with the other great Italian opera house, the Teatro Reale in Rome. The season ordinarily begins on the day after Christmas and continues through (and often beyond) the carnival season; but this year both houses opened nearly three weeks earlier than usual.

The production of Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani* that began the season at La Scala on Dec. 8 was in many ways a fairly close replica of the one given a few months earlier in Florence, during the Maggio Musicale. With the exception of Eugene Conley as Arrigo, all the main parts were sung by the same people—Enzo Mascherini as Guido di Monforte, Maria Meneghini Callas as the Duchessa Elena, and Boris Christoff as Giovanni di Procida. Herbert Graf was again responsible for the stage direction.

But Victor de Sabata, rather than Erich Kleiber, was in the pit at La Scala, and for this reason the two performances differed greatly. In general, the Scala production was uneven and at times distorted. The most impressive bit of music-making during the evening was Mr. De Sabata's delivery of the overture. He played the introduction exactly as Verdi wrote it, with the first violins playing C sharp on the first beat of the third measure (before rehearsal letter A) instead of the usual F sharp, thereby avoiding the rather obvious sequential harmony we usually have here, and by the increased tension he obtained a neat rounding-off of the phrase before beginning the E major passage. He

played the revolution music with almost unbearable speed and intensity, so that one wondered whether it would be possible to stand a full evening of such climactic conducting.

AFTER the overture, unfortunately, the rest of the evening became an orchestral concert with vocal accompaniment. Surely never before was any opera audience enabled to hear Verdi's orchestral score so colored, so rich, so clear, and so insistent; but, alas, the soloists struggled against an overwhelming blanket of instrumental sound, and were sometimes totally submerged in it.

Out of this tempest the voice of Miss Callas did, however, emerge with its usual clarity, fine phrasing, and good artistry. Her tendency to produce sudden unwarranted and unwanted crescendos in piano passages or on sustained notes had disappeared to a large extent, and as a result her voice no longer gave the impression of unevenness and tiredness. She improves and matures as the months go by, and she is certainly now one of the finest singers on the opera stage in Europe today.

Mr. Christoff was not as impressive or commanding as he has been in some past performances. Still, his singing was excellent, his diction clear, and his phrasing logical and well conceived. He obviously felt uncomfortable at times, possibly because of the rather rapid tempos. Mr. Mascherini had grown vocally and artistically, and showed much more self-possession and assurance than before in my experience. The Arrigo of Eugene Conley was the weak point of the cast. Arrigo's music is taxing, but Mr. Conley overcame its technical difficulties with apparent ease. His

(Continued on page 32)

Metropolitan Revives Gianni Schicchi and Salome

THE benefit performance for the Free Milk Fund for Babies, annually one of the brilliant events of the Metropolitan season, this year—on Jan. 10—offered a fresh version of Puccini's Gianni Schicchi, conducted by Alberto Erede and staged by Hans Busch, and the first appearance in two seasons of Ljuba Welitch in Richard Strauss's Salome, with Fritz Reiner as conductor and Herbert Graf as stage director. With the top price of tickets raised from \$7.50 to \$12.50, a capacity audience attended, and the standing room was filled to the point of suffocation.

The management called Gianni Schicchi a "revised" production rather than a new one. No new costumes and little in the way of new scenery were provided, but the movable pieces of the old set were completely rearranged. The big Florentine bed, which is the constant focus of the action, was placed in the center of the stage during the mourning of the relatives around the corpse of Buoso Donati, and moved to the side only when Gianni Schicchi climbed into it to take the dead man's place. The sentimental balcony onto which Lauretta and Rinuccio used to disappear at regular intervals was now missing; I am not sure that this was an improvement, since it was not clear where they *did* go when they passed through the curtains into an undefined space between the bedroom and the backdrop of Florence. In general, however, the appearance of the scene was less cluttered than before, and the rearrangements allowed the main incidents to stand out in clearer visual relief than before.

THE staging was essentially the same as that Mr. Busch had conceived for a television broadcast of Gianni Schicchi conducted by Peter Herman Adler and given by NBC last year. It had the virtue of carefully devised groupings, exactly timed reactions, and a unified style of ensemble acting. It was in every way an enormous advance over the sketchy, patchy production we had before. But I found the full-stage version less satisfying than the television one. For the most part, only the passages that could be reproduced fairly photographically from the original direction were entirely pungent and pointed—the choreographic detail of the opening scene, with the relatives clustered about Buoso's deathbed; Lauretta's pleading with her father, Gianni Schicchi, in *O mio babbino caro*, to

co-operate with the relatives in converting Buoso's will; the whispered individual requests of Nella, La Ciesca, and the others as they dress Schicchi in Buoso's nightgown and nightcap.

When the action spread out over the full stage, the focus often seemed to evaporate, and there was a good deal of none-too-clearly-motivated running about, as if to keep the space filled. Rinuccio's discovery of the will took place too far upstage to carry effectively, either visually or vocally. Most irritatingly, the bed was far too brightly lighted while Schicchi dictated the spurious will, and from the vantage point of the audience it seemed improbable that the lawyer should fail to see him clearly.

In short, the production, while successful in many important ways, was not a complete translation from the idiom of television to that of the stage. In attempting to reverse the usual process (when, if ever, has a television production been used as the basis for a later presentation on the stage?) Mr. Busch was confronted with a problem for whose solution there is no precedent. The most interesting aspect of the experiment, to me at least, was the discovery that so many of the devices of closeup and tight grouping dictated by the idiom of television could be borrowed without essential modification.

THE opera, done in Italian in its last revival after having been done earlier in English, was put into English again this time. The new translation was based on the text prepared by Townsend Brewster for the telecast, but it had undergone such extensive changes by various hands during NBC rehearsals and later at the Metropolitan that he refused to be linked with it. Nobody was given credit in the program. Whenever the singers managed to get the words out into the house they sounded fluent and unaffected, and some of the original gaucheries—I remember particularly "Farewell, dear Florence, city of charm"—had been eliminated.

Great apprehension had been expressed about the first operatic adventure into the English language of Salvatore Baccaloni, who sang the title role; but despite an accent that sounded like a broad caricature of Ezio Pinza in South Pacific, he succeeded in making the sense of most of his lines abundantly clear. The best diction of all, despite an even heavier accent, was that of Alessio de Paolis,



Drawings by B. F. Dolbin

Hans Hotter, a new exponent at the Metropolitan of the role of Jokanaan, spurns the advances of Ljuba Welitch, the Salome of the production

as Gherardo. Gerhard Pechner, as the doctor, introduced the novelty of a Central European accent, but also pronounced his words plainly. Most of the word-swallowing was done by singers whose native language is English. Among these, however, Thomas Hayward, the Rinuccio, and Lawrence Davidson, the lawyer Ser Amantio di Nicolao, were entirely intelligible, and the others could be understood at least



Salvatore Baccaloni in the title role of Puccini's Gianni Schicchi

half the time. From the response of the audience at key moments it was clear that the sense of the libretto was carrying, even though some of the conversational details were lost. Certainly the diction of the whole cast was good enough to warrant the use of a translation.

Mr. Baccaloni's Gianni Schicchi was at once a source of amusement and of respect. The immense, projectile humor of his big body and big voice were irresistible. He had obviously co-operated well with Mr. Busch during the rehearsals, for his performance did not break through the controls and the frame of reference the director wished to preserve. When he sang the part here two years ago he was left more to his own devices, and he overplayed. This time he was a better artist, for his Schicchi was a real character instead of a fabric of buffo tricks, and he earned his success through wholehearted participation in the ensemble.

The romantic roles of Lauretta and Rinuccio were feebly cast. Roberta Peters was largely inaudible, and the placement of the A flats in which *O mio babbino caro* abounds appeared to trouble her. Mr. Hayward had agreeable moments, but he drove his high tones, and they did not soar out into the house as they should have. The very brevity of these roles requires that they be given to first-class

vocalists, to establish the balance Puccini intended between lyricism and comic patter. The closing duet, especially, is a dud unless both singers possess lovely, effortless high D flats. I felt cheated.

The many character parts were uniformly well handled, although it was disturbing to see Lorenzo Alvary's shaking hand, in the part of the venerable Simone, go on and off like a motor started and stopped by an electric switch. Returning members of the 1950 Italian production who had relearned their parts in English were Mr. De Paolis; Paula Lenchner, as Nella; George Cehanovsky, as Betto; Clifford Harvuot, as Marco; Thelma Votipka, as La Ciesca; and Osie Hawkins, as Pinellino. The newcomers were Jean Madeira as Zita, Norman Scott as Guccio, and Mr. Davidson. Mr. Alvary had moved from the role of Ser Amantio to that of Simone, and Mr. Pechner from Marco to Dr. Spinelloccio. The little boy, Gherardino, was still a member of the family of Reginald Tonry, the house manager; but Reginald Jr., having grown out of the part, now turned it over to his brother Eugene.

Mr. Erede's conducting was by a considerable margin his finest at the Metropolitan. His tempos were ideal; he allowed the singers to be heard without sacrificing the color and sweetness of the orchestra; he took delight in the wit of the score and savored its sentiment without letting it become mawkish. The orchestra played brightly and accurately, for him, and there was never any lack of co-ordination between the singers and the players.

In the mood to do his share in making the evening a gala one, Mr. Reiner was in superlative form with Salome, and so was the orchestra. It was a virtuoso performance, but it was more than that, for every inflection of the score carried theatrical as well as musical nuance. Completely unobtrusively he solved the new problem presented by the marked shrinkage in the volume of Miss Welitch's voice since she last sang the title role here, and he allowed Elisabeth Hoengen, who made her debut as Herodias, to dominate the orchestra as forcefully as though her voice were half again as large as it is.

Mr. Graf repeated a scheme of stage direction that has always been noteworthy for both its clarity of design and its artful pictorial values, and for once—whether thanks to his efforts or to those of the individual artists—managed to make it seem that everybody was acting and nobody posing. His direction also profited from the fact that Donald Oenslager, who created the setting and costumes in 1942, returned to light the production. Both visibility and atmosphere were enhanced by his skill, and the

(Continued on page 24)



Elisabeth Hoengen as Herodias



Set Svanholm as Herod

New Così Fan Tutte

Has Metropolitan Premiere

By ROBERT SABIN

THE merits and the defects of the Metropolitan Opera's new production of Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*, which had its first performance on Dec. 28, may be summarized by the observation that it was a good show. Staged by Alfred Lunt, conducted by Fritz Stiedry, with décor and costumes by Rolf Gerard, and with a new English version of the libretto by Ruth and Thomas P. Martin, the revival had been well co-ordinated and efficiently produced. But *Così Fan Tutte* is a masterpiece of musical wit and refinement, comparable in elegance of style to the comedies of Congreve; what the Metropolitan gave us was a musically and dramatically undistinguished performance.

There was nothing careless or haphazard about the rollicking comedy that the director and conductor had shaped; it moved smoothly and it kept the audience in high spirits. Yet the fact remained that this *Così Fan Tutte* missed much of the elegance, the exquisite musical detail, and the polished charm of Mozart's opera. In view of the vast spaces of the Metropolitan (a serious obstacle to the production of *Così Fan Tutte*, which through its very nature needs a smaller house) and in view of the exigencies of casting, this production may have been the best that Mr. Lunt and Mr. Stiedry could achieve. But, for all its merits, it seemed to me to miss the artistic point of the opera, which is the distillation of rather ordinary material into a miracle of musical delicacy and dramatic fantasy.

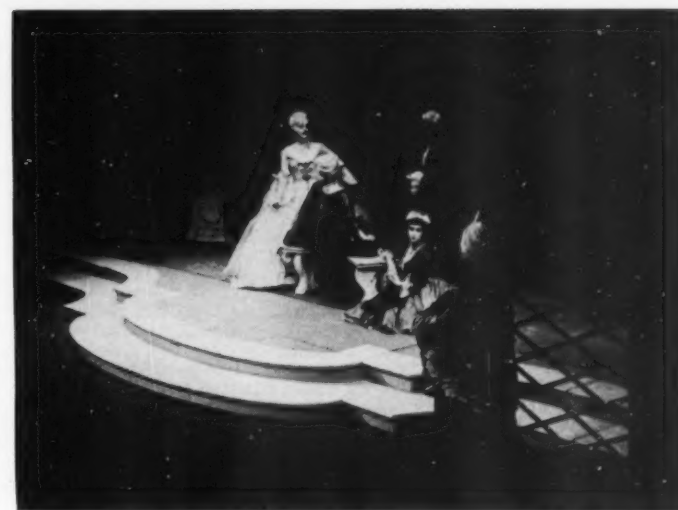
Mr. Lunt had worked out the stage business in great detail so that it moved with machine-like precision; and he himself appeared on stage as a servant, to light the footlights and set off the performance on a note of broad but polished humor. Unfortunately, the moment he disappeared from the stage, the polish disappeared with him and what we had for the rest of the evening was well-disciplined, but conventional, stage business and rather crude acting.

When eighteenth-century comedy is revived on the stage, producers go to

great pains to obtain actors who can play it with an elegance and stylization that evoke the period, even though they do not literally imitate it. It is vastly more difficult to obtain singing actors who can do the same thing for eighteenth-century operas. But it is not impossible, and some day we may hear and see a Mozart performance at the Metropolitan that is brilliant, sensitive, and stylistically above reproach in every role. This has not happened to my knowledge in the last fifteen years.

Mr. Stiedry conducted with warm love for the music and great care for the caress of Mozart's melodies and the subtle beauty of his harmony; yet the opera lacked vivacity and lightness of touch in many passages where those qualities are needed. Mr. Gerard's set was in my opinion ugly; it seemed designed with a limited budget in mind rather than the possibilities inherent in inexpensive materials. In style, it was a sort of bastardized Matisse-Dufy with a procenium and other décor that reminded one of iron porch furniture. Against a very pale bay of Naples, cut-out patterns were exploited in some of the outdoor scenes, and the interiors were also of the cardboard-and-paste-pot school of design. A dingy-looking black curtain was used to separate the inner stage from the apron, so that scene changes could be achieved without undue interruption to the action. For intermediate scenes or parts of them, the characters moved down some steps to the front of the stage. The women's costumes in Act I were in a pseudo-eighteenth-century style that could as easily have been Victorian. Neither the materials nor the colors were elegant. The disguises of the lovers, however, were ingenious and amusing, as were Despina's hilariously funny disguises as the doctor and the notary.

The translation of the libretto was singable and racy. It lacked polish of locution, and its excursions into modern vernacular seemed out of place in an eighteenth-century comedy of artifice. Occasionally it blunted the humor of Da Ponte's original, as in Don Alfonso's rejoinder to Guglielmo's challenge in Act I, Scene 1,



Photos by Sedge LeBlang

While John Brownlee and Patrice Munsel look on as co-conspirators, the "Albanian" lovers approach the ladies in the second act of *Così Fan Tutte*

"Io son uomo di pace, e duelli non fo, se non a mensa." ("I am a man of peace, and I don't engage in duels, except at the dinner table.") which the translators rendered: "I'm a peace loving bachelor, and get my satisfaction when I'm dining." Even though this refers to Guglielmo's challenge, "You'll render us complete satisfaction," it labors the point of the quip.

The major burden of the singing fell upon Eleanor Steber in the role of Fiordiligi. With all due regard to the achievements of the other artists in the cast, it must be admitted that she alone ever achieved that flawless beauty of tone and phrase and vocal agility that make Mozart singing an unalloyed delight. It was in the more lyric passages that her voice sounded best. The two great arias, *Come scoglio* (Strongly founded), and *Per pietà* (Dearest love, I beg your pardon), were conceived for a bigger, more heroic voice than hers, yet she sang them with courageous sweep. The first aria ranges from A below middle C to high B flat, with a leap of a tenth and sundry other severe technical problems to be overcome; and the second aria ascends to high C, with equal demands upon volume and flexibility. That Miss Steber sang them as well as she did is high tribute to her artistry.

Blanche Thebom was a pert and vivacious Dorabella, and she achieved both variety of tone color and considerable flexibility. At times her voice seemed a bit heavy in rapid passages, and her delivery became sententious, as if she were singing in oratorio.

Neither Richard Tucker as Ferrando, nor Frank Guarrera, as Guglielmo, was happily cast, but both of them had obviously worked hard with Mr. Lunt and Mr. Stiedry. They sang and acted with gusto, if not with very legitimate style. Mozart requires a clarity of articulation and lightness of tone in rapid passages that neither of these singers achieved, and both of them tended to sing their solo arias with accents and emotional inflections more appropriate to the music of Verdi or Puccini. Yet, granting the lack of virtuosity and style in their performances, there was much to applaud in their vivacity.

Patrice Munsel delighted the audience with the amusing antics of Despina. She was completely at home on the stage and made each of her points with unerring skill; but I could not help feeling that she made it too much of a stock soubrette part. Vivid as her performance was, it could have been sung more beautifully and carried off with more grace and sense of period. Her Despina was too much like her Adele, in *Fledermaus*. Mr. Lunt and Mr. Stiedry could have done more with her talents.

John Brownlee was an agreeable

Don Alfonso, with a fineness of ear for balance in ensembles that revealed the practiced Mozartean artist. His voice was not, however, in best condition. The choruses were rather limply sung, although Mr. Stiedry was careful to weave them into the flow of the action without a hitch.

Così Fan Tutte had not been given at the Metropolitan since the 1927-28 season. The audience enjoyed the performance immensely and the success of the venture seemed assured. To do the opera at all was a brave and idealistic gesture.

Fledermaus, Dec. 18

Mildred Miller, new to the Metropolitan this season, sang her first Orlofsky in a benefit performance of Strauss's *Fledermaus* for the Stepney Fresh Air Camp. Josef Blatt conducted, and other members of the cast were Hilde Gueden, Charles Kullman, Brian Sullivan, Patrice Munsel, Jack Mann, and Clifford Harvuot.

Miss Miller sang engagingly and put her aria across confidently. Her characterization differed in spirit from other Orlofsky's in the Metropolitan production, since she never really seemed bored by the proceedings. Her costume and hair-do made her look decidedly odd, with an enormous head and a very short body, but her unaffected pleasantness was quite winning.

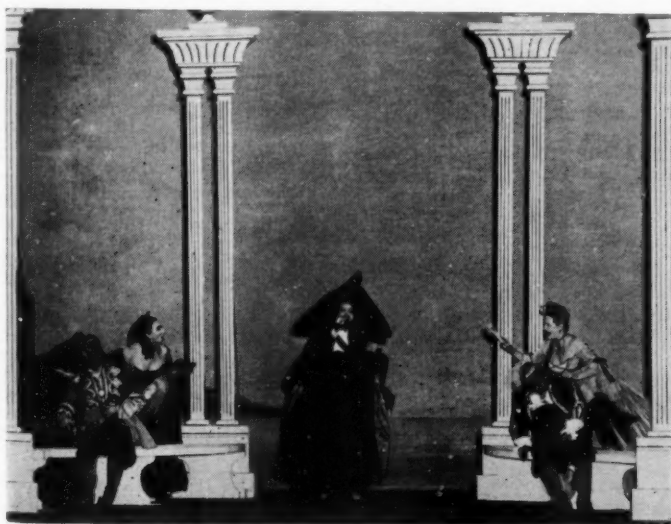
—J. H., JR.

Lucia di Lammermoor, Dec. 19

After being absent from the Metropolitan repertoire for a season, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* reappeared in a performance that demonstrated more the opera's durability than the excellences of the company that gave it. Lily Pons made her first appearance of the season in the title role, with Ferruccio Tagliavini as Edgardo and Giuseppe Valdengo as Ashton. Norman Scott sang his first Raimondo and Gabor Carelli his first Bucklaw. Thelma Votipka was Alisa, and Paul Franke was Normanno. Fausto Cleva conducted the opera for the first time at the Metropolitan.

Miss Pons, starting her 21st Metropolitan season, looked fresh and attractive and moved with her customary precision and astuteness. Her every move was calculated to the half inch and the split second, and if this exactitude made her impersonation seem something less than spontaneous it left the audience with an impression of real visual charm. On the musical side, too, Miss Pons's performance was carefully prepared and delivered. She seemed less reluctant than in the past to sing out full voice in the first- and second-act duets—an approach well suited to

(Continued on page 21)



In the first act of *Così Fan Tutte*, Miss Munsel, disguised as a doctor, brings to life the swooning Frank Guarrera (left) and Richard Tucker, as Blanche Thebom (left) and Eleanor Steber express their great perturbation

New York Music Critics Make Composition Awards

By CECIL SMITH

ON the first Monday afternoon of the new year, nineteen members of the New York Music Critics Circle gathered in the handsome clubroom of the new addition to the New York Times building. An hour and a half later, four composers had been singled out for awards for the best pieces, in four different categories, performed in New York in the past fifteen months, and a fifth composer had been voted a special citation.

Howard Swanson's Short Symphony, first performed by Dimitri Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony on Nov. 23, 1950, was chosen as the best orchestral work heard in New York for the first time during the period under consideration. (A gap of fifteen months had occurred since the last Critics Circle award because of the decision to make the circle's musical year conform to the calendar year.) Bohuslav Martinu's one-act opera Comedy on the Bridge, presented by the Mannes Music School at Hunter Playhouse on May 28, 1951, was voted the best opera new here. William Schuman's Judith, a work for solo dancer and orchestra commissioned by the Louisville Philharmonic and first performed there, and given in New York in December, 1950, by Robert Whitney and the Louisville orchestra with Martha Graham as soloist, was named the best dance score. Benjamin Britten's A Spring Symphony, presented by the Schola Cantorum, under Hugh Ross, on Feb. 16, 1951, was designated the best choral work.

No award was made for a piece of chamber music because too few of the members of the circle had heard all, or even the larger number, of the works under consideration. To avoid such a lapse in the future, the circle is making arrangements to obtain recordings, since the crowded concert schedule in New York clearly makes it impossible for every critic to hear the premieres of all important chamber-music compositions.

A special citation was made jointly "to the National Broadcasting Company for its enterprise in commissioning and producing an opera for television and to Gian-Carlo Menotti for composing Amahl and the Night Visitors for this purpose." Amahl and the Night Visitors was telecast by NBC-TV on Dec. 24, 1951. The tribute to this work took the form of a special citation instead of the customary award because the members of the circle were eager to express their approval of NBC as well as of the composer.

The award to Mr. Swanson for his Short Symphony was especially noteworthy, for the symphony was entered in a larger field than previous Critics Circle prize-winners. In a new constitution adopted by the circle in the fall of 1950, the range of the awards was broadened to include music by foreign as well as American composers. This change resulted from the critics' conviction that musical values are international rather than patriotic; and, anyway, no satisfactory definition of an American composer had ever been reached, in view of the confusing status of a large number of foreign-born musicians who have become American citizens at one time or another. The emergence of Mr. Swanson as the first Negro composer to be recognized by a Critics Circle award was a happy accident of the day's voting.

IN the orchestral category, the tally was close. When Howard Taubman, president of the circle, and Carter Harman, secretary, tabulated the first ballot, there was found to be a three-way tie between the Swanson work, William Schuman's Sixth Symphony, and Arthur Honegger's Fifth Symphony. It was not until the fourth ballot that the Swanson symphony attained a majority of the votes, although the third ballot began to show a swing in its direction. The shift in allegiance of those who transferred their votes in the third and fourth ballots is not hard to understand. The issue became a conflict between an American work and a foreign one, and several advocates of the Schuman symphony—recognizing, no doubt, that the inclusion of Judith in the category of dance music provided a further means of recognizing the same composer—abandoned their support of it in order to form a bloc in favor of a single American work. This attitude, it should be emphasized, was not jingoistic; it represented, rather, the opinion on the part of several voters that the Honegger symphony, while perhaps superior to the Swanson piece in sheer professionalism of craft, is a work of somewhat pale expressive content. The Swanson symphony also ultimately received the votes of individual members who supported on the first ballot Aaron Copland's Clarinet Concerto, Paul Creston's Symphony No. 3, and Peter Menin's Symphony No. 5.

Voting was swifter in the operatic category. Only four operas were considered, whereas the list of eligible orchestral works had filled a page and a half. Martinu's Comedy on the Bridge, which was received with universal delight at its premiere, won a clear majority on the first ballot. The

runner-up was Luigi Dallapiccola's The Prisoner, given at the Juilliard School of Music on March 15, 1951. The other operas under consideration were Douglas Moore's Giants in the Earth, produced at Columbia University on March 28, 1951, and David Tamkin's The Dybbuk, produced by the New York City Opera Company on Oct. 4, 1951.

The list of dance scores was almost as brief, for only five titles were included. Again only one ballot was required for the selection of Schuman's Judith, which received all but two votes. Single ballots were cast for two pieces in the repertory of Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris—Henri Sauguet's Les Forains and Jean Michel Damaze's La Croqueuse de Diamants, Georges Auric's Les Chaises Musicales, another Ballets de Paris item, and Jean Françaix's Les Demoiselles de la Nuit, presented by Ballet Theatre, won no votes.

Britten's Spring Symphony likewise attained a majority of the votes on the first ballot, overriding Elliott Carter's Musicians Wrestle Everywhere; Camargo Guarnieri's Vamos Aloanda, and Egbeigi; Darius Milhaud's Naissance de Venus; and Dallapiccola's Songs in Captivity. All the losing pieces were first given by the League of Composers except Songs in Captivity, which figured in a program of the International Society for Contemporary Music.

Since no chamber-music award was made, it may be of interest to name the works that were eligible. They were John Cage's Quartet; Copland's Piano Quartet; Ingolf Dahl's Allegro and Arioso, for wind instruments; Roger Goeb's Suite for Woodwind Trio, and Septet for Brass Instruments; Lou Harrison's Canticle No. 3; Meyer Kupferman's Chamber Symphony for Eight Instruments; John Lessard's Concerto for Winds; Walter Piston's Divertimento; Marcel Poot's Trois Pièces en Trio; and Schuman's String Quartet No. 4.

THE composer most heavily represented in the complete list was Martinu. In addition to the prize-winning opera, he is the composer also of three concertos heard for the first time in New York during the fifteen-month period under consideration—his Third Piano Concerto, Fourth Piano Concerto, and Concerto for Two Violins. The names of Honegger and Schuman appeared three times—Honegger with the Fifth Symphony, the Prelude, Fugue, and Postlude, and the Sérénade à Angélique; and Schuman with the Sixth Symphony, the Fourth Quartet, and the prize-winning Judith. Composers represented by two works were Copland, Dallapiccola, David Diamond, Françaix, Goeb, Guarnieri, Alan Hovhaness, and Milhaud. The following names, in addition to those already mentioned, appeared in connection with single works: Samuel Barber, Ernest Bloch, Robert Casadesu, Norman Dello Joio, Lukas Foss, Alejandro García-Caturla, Armando Guevara, Ernst Krenek, Dai-Keong Lee, Robert Nagel, Vincent Persichetti, Alfred Uhl, and Stefan Wolpe.

The works on which the Critics Circle voted did not constitute an exhaustive list of the compositions per-

formed for the first time in New York during the past fifteen months. Careful preliminary spadework was done by an awards committee, which went through the tabulations of first performances contained in each issue of MUSICAL AMERICA, eliminating all the works whose technical or expressive qualities were patently unimpressive. Whenever the committee members felt even a shadow of doubt as to the justice of discarding a title, they played fair by retaining it on the final list. The wisdom of leaning over backwards to leave in every piece with a ghost of a claim to consideration was demonstrated by occasional non-conformist votes of individuals—most notably, perhaps, in the case of the lone vote cast for Damaze's La Croqueuse de Diamants, a score with such strong overtones of the Parisian music hall that one would hardly expect a serious-minded New York critic to be enamored of it.

THE present membership of the Critics Circle provides a broader cross-section of opinion than was possible under the earlier constitution. Until the terms of membership were changed, only the newspaper critics entitled to bylines were admitted, along with one representative from each magazine in a narrowly restricted list. Thus J. S. Harrison and Peggy Glanville-Hicks of the *Herald Tribune* were excluded because their articles are signed only with initials; Chandler Thomas of *Time* was excluded because reviews are not signed at all in that magazine; and Quaintance Eaton, Robert Sabin, and other reviewers on the staff of MUSICAL AMERICA were excluded because the Editor served as the single representative of the magazine. Under the revised membership clause these experienced critics no longer need press their noses against the cold window-pane as they look in from outside. The expansion of the roster has markedly reduced the median age of circle members, for many of the newcomers still have all their hair and have not developed lines in their faces.

The admission of younger reviewers and of reviewers from a wider range of publications (the *New Yorker* and *Cue*, for instance, may now be represented) has brought about an encouraging transformation in the tone of the organization. This year the awards committee functioned swiftly and energetically. Carter Harman and Harold Schonberg, both of the *Times*, obtained a large number of studio recordings, and Irving Kolodin, of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, secured a high-fidelity record-player for the use of the group. Dorothy Dickhaut, manager of Town Hall, set aside a room on the mezzanine floor as a private hideout for the circle, and here the phonograph and recordings were made available at all hours of the day and evening. There was even a refrigerator, but the hopeful critic who stocked it with bottled beer was disappointed, since the motor did not work.

It is possible, of course, to overestimate the significance of any musical prize. The Critics Circle makes no pretense of infallibility or, for that matter, of freedom from personal bias or mass enthusiasm. Nor does any single one of this year's awards stem from unanimous agreement. I for one favored the Honegger symphony and Dallapiccola's The Prisoner, but I do not feel compromised because I was outvoted in these two instances. Nor do I feel petulant because a majority of my colleagues did not share my belief that the Swanson symphony, despite its freshness and energy, does not quite deserve an accolade. For Mr. Swanson's sake I am glad that he has received the encouragement the award will undoubtedly give him, and I am willing and happy to be a party to the democratic process through which he was recognized.



Bohuslav Martinu



Benjamin Britten



Gian-Carlo Menotti



Howard Swanson



William Schuman

Opera Seasons Open In Rome and Naples

By SIEGMUND LEVARIE

OPENING performances at the great opera houses in Rome and Naples are gala events in which splendor rules both in the audience and on the stage. The advance posters of both opera houses promised grandiose works newly studied and staged. They also warned the public that the rule requiring evening dress would be "rigorously enforced" and, at least in Rome, that the repetition of numbers would not be permitted for reasons of "order and art."

I can vouch for the rigorous enforcement of public splendor, for I had to borrow a tuxedo in order to be admitted. I can also vouch for a minimum of resistance on the part of Vittorio Gui, the conductor of Verdi's *Nabucco* in Rome, to repeating the chorus, *Va, pensiero*, in which the captive Hebrews by the waters of Babylon mourn for their lost freedom. The repetition seemed deserved, for in *Nabucco* the chorus vies with the soloists for prominence in dramatic participation and musical expression. In the opening performance on Dec. 8, it surpassed the soloists in sensuous beauty of tone and exquisite phrasing.

Nabucco is Verdi's third opera—completed when he was 29 years old—and the one that first brought him real success. To a listener of today, its analogies to *Aida* are unavoidable. The tenor, king of Jerusalem, loves the daughter of his enemy Nabucodonosor, the king of Babylon. When his beloved soprano is captured by the Hebrews, he betrays his own people by planning to flee with her. He is foiled by the princess Abigaille, who is hopelessly in love with him, and by the high priest Zaccaria, who, like Ramfis is a bass usually surrounded by a male choir. This whole action takes place in temples and palaces which, identified as Hebraic and Babylonian in the libretto, looked as if they could serve the *Aida* production of anyone save an Egyptologist; and, in one of the seven scenes, on an African river bank that would provide a convincing trysting place for Radames. As in *Aida*, an early trio presents the tenor between the two women competing for him, and there is a big triumphal scene involving everybody.

WHAT *Nabucco* lacks is the wonderful integration of the *Aida* score, which permits us to sympathize with Amneris while *Aida* and Radames are dying. The earlier opera sacrifices the characterization of the loving couple, after a promising first act, almost to the point of musical submersion. But this sacrifice, one suspects, is one of the less mature although thoroughly effective devices for isolating the powerful figure of Nabucodonosor himself. From him the whole opera gains not merely the name but that vitality that has warranted its survival.

Nabucodonosor is one of Verdi's great father roles. His tragedy is conditioned by his relationship to his daughter, whom he is forced to condemn to death and whose fate finally dispels his madness. Surrounded by a plot differing in detail, this kind of father recurs as Simon Boccanegra, Philip II, Rigoletto, Giorgio Ger-

mont, and Amonasro, to mention the more popular examples. The solo scene at the beginning of the last act is a masterpiece of musical force. Madness has made the king helpless but not insensitive to the impending death of his daughter or to the memory of his former glory. His incoherent exclamations are set in relief by musical fragments from earlier scenes until in a melodious prayer he finds the way back to his former power of mind and action.

Gino Bechi, singing the title role, was an impressive madman if a bourgeois king. His baritone voice sounded young and well focused without keeping the hearer interested by either richness or modulation of timbre. He received the biggest ovation of any soloist after turning mad in the second-act finale. His acting carried him away to the point where he really never abandoned certain mannerisms of madness (such as an exaggeratedly loose-jointed movement of arms and legs) even after regaining his sanity.

The other great characterization of the score is that of Abigaille, Nabucodonosor's antagonist. The part is written for a soprano who must possess a maximum range of voice and expression. Lyrical lines alternate with dramatic explosions, forceful recitatives with taxing cadenzas. Abigaille reminds one vocally of Norma. All the difficulties of the role were solved by the supreme mastery of Maria Caniglia, the *prima donna* (and really the first lady) of the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome. One could have wished for more sensuous vocal beauty but not for a more authoritative representation of the grandiose part.

The two lovers sing so little after their initial prominence that one must forgive the singers for never quite warming up. But both the tenor Francesco Albanese and the mezzo-soprano Myriam Pirazzini aroused curiosity to hear them in other, larger parts. Thus the unequivocally best singing of the evening came from Nicola Rossi-Lemeni as Zaccaria, the high priest of the Hebrews. In the

massive first act he alone stood out in vocal beauty and compelling projection, and he successfully held his own in the river scene against the repeated, and hence overpowering, chorus.

It was not lack of preparation that made the whole production fall just short of being perfectly satisfactory. One missed that last bit of imagination that stamps a performance as unique. The orchestra phrased carefully, but did not gain enough life under Vittorio Gui's experienced, heavy hand. The stage sets, by Carlo Maria Cristini, although new and expensive, looked as though one had seen them innumerable times before in other operas. The river scene alone made a memorable impression, and that by virtue of the manner in which Ettore Salani made his lights play on the waves of the Euphrates. The stage direction by Giovacchino Forzano was more stereotyped than even a deliberately conservative production justified. In the finale, for instance, the priests of Baal, grouped around their high priest, remained to the very end in the highest and most prominent position on the stage even after the shattering of the statue of Baal had decided the plot in favor of the Hebrews. Nabucodonosor's return to royal power after two acts of madness would have been emphasized by some visual symbol, but he remained in his tattered rags, with not so much as a regal cloth to assist his transformation.

THE opening of the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, on Dec. 15, with Gaspare Spontini's *Fernando Cortez* was, on the other hand, a completely successful realization of a somewhat problematic work. It is significant that Mr. Cristini, who designed the new stage sets for Naples as well as for Rome, let his imagination roam more freely in the Spontini work. The result was that—with all the conservatism that is apparently desired by Italian audiences—the Mexican temples and palaces looked sufficiently removed from the Nile to evoke spontaneous applause in several of the five scenes.

A few words must be said about the work in order to appreciate the superb accomplishment of the representation. The immediate reason for reviving this opera and allotting it the honor of the opening night is the hundredth anniversary of Spontini's death (Jan. 14, 1851). Although he was not born in Naples, Spontini studied there in the Conservatorio della Pietà dei Turchini and owes much of his technical skill and dramatic insights to the tradition of Neapolitan opera. He later became

omnipotent director of the opera house in Berlin, and in the first half of the nineteenth century he influenced, in one way or another, every opera composer in Europe. Even Wagner paid his tribute in a special essay entitled *Erinnerungen an Spontini*. La Vestale, generally considered Spontini's strongest opera, was deliberately avoided by the direction of the Teatro S. Carlo because it had been revived by the Maggio Musicale in Florence only two years ago. *Fernando Cortez*, written in 1809 and completely revised in 1817, makes one wonder how much of Spontini's undisputed success in the last century was due to extra-musical factors. The score leans heavily on theatrical effects. The first curtain parts on a tempestuous night in the courtyard of an exotic temple; and before the three acts are over the audience has witnessed sacerdotal curses, military mutiny, burning ships, and burning palaces without having been persuaded to sympathize with any of the individual Spanish or Mexican characters. Only the bit part of Montezuma—superbly portrayed by Italo Tajo—unexpectedly touches the hearer by an emergence into character a few minutes before everybody goes home. The plot is exactly what you would expect it to be, namely, the political struggle between Spaniards and Mexicans set against friendly feelings across the lines between a Mexican princess, Amazily, and the Spanish general, Cortez. This kind of plot could well develop the characters without sacrificing the accompanying grand effects, again as in *Aida*; but Spontini fails to do this. Cortez' heroic decision to remain in Mexico, for instance, is submerged first by a long and extraneous ballet—directed, by the way, by Bianca Gallizia in an original and attractive manner uncommon in opera ballet—and then by a general conflagration of the expensive stage set, without having been musically projected by even one line that approaches the impact of the comparable Sacerdote, *io resto a te in Aida*.

The soloists express themselves mostly in accompanied recitatives which, according to textbooks, prepared the way for Wagner. To me they sounded interminably dull and stilted, the full orchestra playing hardly more than simple chords that sounded like disproportionately heavy transcriptions of an eighteenth-century harpsichord accompaniment. The device of interrupting a cadence by a surprise move to the dominant of the relative (from a dominant chord on G, for instance, to an E major triad in the first inversion) occurs too regularly to break the monotony. Nor are there enough closed solo numbers to acquaint one better with the characters and moods of the characters.

In our time, when the revival of forgotten scores has become fashionable, it is impossible to speak too strongly against the tendency to consider old music good merely because it is old. Any music, whether contemporary or antique, has to be evaluated in its own terms. No score deserves practical resurrection unless it possesses, apart from its historic interest, that artistic quality which can give delight or instruction to an audience.

THE problems of the Spontini work were met by the Naples production with a seriousness of intent and glamor of execution that resulted in a superb performance. The list of eleven soloists included only one woman, and Renata Tebaldi made the most of her isolated position. She looked magnificent, acted like a real princess, and in one of the rare formal arias of the score made one regret that the sterile part of Amazily did not permit her to unfold her full dramatic temperament. Her total artistic projection seduced one into

(Continued on page 33)



Oscar Savio

HAITIAN EMPEROR IN ROME

After the first Rome performance of Louis Gruenberg's opera *The Emperor Jones*, Nicola Rossi-Lemeni, who sang the title role, is joined backstage by Mr. Gruenberg (left) and three members of the Teatro dell'Opera staff

Siegmund Levarie, of the University of Chicago music department, stopped off long enough, on his way home from a six-month sabbatical in Italy, to attend the season's openings at two major opera houses.

Strauss's Elektra as Seen

By Hugo von Hofmannsthal

By ROBERT BREUER

SPEAKING to the radio audience during an intermission of a recent Metropolitan Opera broadcast, Rudolf Bing called Richard Strauss's Elektra, which will be revived in February, a work of contemporary importance. He meant this, no doubt, from the musical point of view. And he was probably right, as far as the American audience is concerned, for America has not yet become acquainted with the greater bulk of Strauss's later musical dramas and comedies.

Only the two one-act dramas Salome and Elektra, the more "tuneful" Rosenkavalier, and the fanciful Ariadne auf Naxos have reached our stage. These four works, widely different in style, subject matter, and mood, are creations of Strauss's most splendid and sensational era, which coincided with the momentous upheavals brought about by Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis, the naturalistic school in drama and painting, and the development of modern technical inventions in the outwardly peaceful but inwardly tense years before the first World War. Perhaps the later Strauss operas have remained sealed books for American music lovers because someone assumed that the scenic and musical achievements in the four more famous works could not be surpassed. The habitually insecure financial position of the Metropolitan Opera, moreover, does not perhaps warrant its gambling with such works as Die Frau ohne Schatten, Intermezzo, Arabella, and Die schweigsame Frau.

Elektra, which had its premiere on Jan. 25, 1909, in the Royal Opera House in Dresden, was of special significance in Strauss's operatic career, for it was his first collaboration with the noted Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal. It initiated a cordial and fruitful relationship that lasted for two decades, until it was abruptly ended by the untimely death of Hofmannsthal on July 15, 1929. The musical dramas created by the two men in that twenty-year period were, after Elektra, Der Rosenkavalier, Ariadne auf Naxos, Die Frau ohne Schatten, Die Aegyptische Helena, and Arabella.

FOR a student in the late 1920s, literary and musical life in Vienna exceeded by far all other interests. The classroom of the Realgymnasium I attended was filled with comment and violent critical debate after every noteworthy premiere. To us, many "causes" in the theatrical world (I remember, for instance, the rift between Franz Schalk and Richard Strauss, when they shared the direction of the Staatsoper) overshadowed in significance even the most important battles on the football fields. And what could be a better afternoon or evening pastime for a Mittelschüler than to line up with hundreds of other enthusiasts in the narrow enclosures outside the big theatres? There hopeful applicants for standing-room tickets assembled, pockets filled with sandwiches, many hours before curtain time. What could be more exciting than the passing glimpse of a celebrity walking across Kärntnerstrasse or

Robert Breuer, Vienna-born writer and American citizen, is New York correspondent of the Zurich Schweizerische Musikzeitung.

Graben? The autograph-hunters who in these happy days besieged writers, composers, actors, and singers developed an astonishing sagacity and audacity. Not even a closely guarded hotel suite was a safe haven for an artist, once a member of Vienna's cultural gang had made up his mind to rout him out.

When the time for the final examination in the first-grade secondary school (entitling the successful candidate to matriculate without further test at any Austrian university) approached, I had to choose a subject for my literary essay. This Matura-Arbeit could be based on any suitable theme in the whole realm of literature. Having fought many a battle for the works of Richard Strauss from the top balcony of the Staatsoper, I was familiar with all his operas up to that time, since they all belonged in the standard Vienna repertoire. I determined to write about the Elektra dramas of Sophocles and Hofmannsthal, feeling that the Greek drama, in its simple and overwhelming force and the modern adaptation could well be used for a literary comparison.

No sooner had my teacher agreed to my topic than I wrote to Hofmannsthal asking him for his personal views on the subject. Here I was, a teenage student, venturing to address one of our outstanding poets, whom I would view with awe whenever seeing him—as I had a few months earlier, when he and Arthur Schnitzler, carrying Christmas presents, stood together at a street corner while a fine flurry of snow fell over the city! I was sure my letter would receive no answer and be thrown in the wastebasket with other similarly annoying documents.

ABOUT two months later, however, I received a reply from Hofmannsthal, dated Bad Aussee, Sept. 23, 1928. His message read: "Dear Mr. Breuer: It is only to-day that I have seen your letter of July 21. I hasten to tell you something on the

Those classic figures I visualize as eternal vessels into which new generations of poets always will pour a new psychological content. By the way, you can find several allusions to that motif of the Helena phantom in the Helen act of the second part of Goethe's Faust.

"Your formulation of the subject 'for the modern opera stage' does not seem to be a happy one. You would do better to say 'for the modern stage.' Elektra was written for the Sprechbühne and performed for many years in numerous German and other European theatres before Strauss came to ask me to take it as the basis for an operatic composition. And the Alceste, written in 1893 as a very free translation of the Euripidean Alceste, incidentally belongs to the same motivic group.

"I wish you all the best for your essay and remain with kindest regards,

"Yours,
"Hofmannsthal."

This information shed new light on my theme. I began to see more clearly the free connections existing between Sophocles' chorus-drama and the much stricter adaptation that Hofmannsthal had given the powerful Elektra story. I also sensed the colossal impact of the ever-existing human values upon the characters in the plot. Like Sophocles, Hofmannsthal proved himself to be a master of the three dramatic unities. Time, place, and action were unified in a single straight form. Although Sophocles, the first efficient organizer of dramatic action and incident, the creator of dramatic character, brought revolutionary innovations to the Hellenic stage, the Elektra story now took on an entirely new and momentous meaning.

The colossal and blood-curdling picture painted by Hofmannsthal on the modern canvas clearly foreshadows the psychological atmosphere that was to blanket almost all Europe a few years later—the nightmarish inferno of hate and revenge, of human anguish and heavy omen. Here one can find the shameless misery of the disgraced Elektra as a parallel to stark reality; one can see in the hollow-eyed Klytemnestra, bedecked with jewels and glimmering stones, a symbol of the new-rich woman who was to emerge after the war's bitter cruelties; one could feel the innocent desire of the young and beautiful Chrysothemis, yearning for a man's embrace, for a home and for a hearth, ("I am a woman, and a woman's lot I crave"); one could recognize Aegistheus, the man who stayed home

Ernst von Schuch, the conductor—had received many curtain calls, confesses in his Observations and Reminiscences: "The success of the premiere was—so I learned as usual only afterwards—a mere tribute of respect. Angelo Neumann even wired to Prague, 'A flop!' Now Elektra means to many people the climax of my entire creative work."

These statements indicate that six years before the outbreak of the first World War Hofmannsthal's realistic approach into the untouchable world of the classics did not evoke the right echo. He was called "unesthetic and morbid" for attempting to bring the hateful threnody on the stage. But as Oscar Wilde once asked, "Would you call Shakespeare insane because he wrote King Lear?"

Time has made the reproaches against the librettist fade away. Elektra certainly was not meant to whet the appetite of a public hungry for cheap and perverse sensations; Hofmannsthal brought the tragedy down to earth from its lofty Olympian heights without trying to popularize it. The deeply affecting scene of Orestes' unexpected return to Mykene prefigures the somecoming of countless nameless soldiers who came back from the war to find their homes besmirched and defiled. As Max Graf observes, in Modern Music: "The masochism and sadism of Elektra are a part of the intensified nervousness of that period." Willi Schuh, the eminent Swiss Strauss scholar, says: "In the proportions of these scenes a championship manifests itself which leaves far below everything that was composed for the operatic stage since Wagner."

In his recent biography of Strauss, Kurt Pfister demonstrates anew the divergence of Hofmannsthal's drama from the classic world. The "noble simplicity" and the "quiet magnitude" of the classic spirit were gone. Gone too was the Scythian-barbarian atmosphere that sometimes served to recall a heroic epoch. Instead, Hofmannsthal evokes the deep and everlasting passions, the timeless and always timely emotions of hate and love, fear and freedom, and he focuses them in vehement and effective contrast.

THE Viennese musicologist Richard Specht sensed the neurotic obsession by which the Hofmannsthal-Strauss Elektra is plagued. In this naturalistic dramatic-symphonic poem, he visualized Agamemnon's daughter as seeking revenge not only for her father but also for a mother she never actually possessed. This provides a new angle to the Freudian interpretation of the work: In having Orestes kill Klytemnestra, Elektra finds satisfaction; not only her father's murder but the deeds of her unmotherly mother are avenged. This view could not be inferred from Sophocles' tragedy, which suggests no Freudian interpretation and implies no such daring and breathtaking finale as that of the modern setting. The intensity of this climax is best indicated in words by Hofmannsthal's stage directions in the score: "Elektra descends from the threshold. She has flung back her head like a Maenad. She flings her knees and arms about: it is a nameless dance in which she comes forward." And then she sings in an ecstasy: "Say naught and dance on! All must come to my side! Here take your place! The burden of joy I carry, and I lead the sacred dance! Who happy is, as we, can do but this: Say naught, and dance on." The analogy with Salome's dance is incidental. While both Herodias and Agamemnon's daughters end their lives in dances of passion, the psychological motivations are quite different.

Whether or not Strauss felt the similarity between the age in which the action of Elektra takes place and the foreboding years in pre-war Europe, he skillfully weighed the strong

(Continued on page 32)

Hofmannsthal regarded his libretto and Strauss's music as a free modernization of Sophocles; the modern listener can best approach the tragedy by viewing it in terms of its naturalistic Freudianism

subject. The relationship of my Elektra to the form Sophocles had given the material is a very free one. Originally my idea was to create some sort of a free poetic imitation, but afterwards I fell completely under the spell of fantasy, and so it became an entirely new work; a creation which undoubtedly will show future readers the peculiar character of the time of its origin, namely, the beginning of the twentieth century.

"For Ariadne and Helen there are neither sources nor models. Generally speaking, the episode of the Egyptian Helen is taken from an anecdote in the Helen mythos which forms the basis of Euripides' Helena. But the turning of the motif is completely different, the connection utterly loose.

and cynically stole his easy victories; one could hear the voice of the homecoming Orestes, under whose blow the palace of false majesty and glory was shattered.

VIEWED in this perspective, the verdict of the judges who witnessed the Elektra premiere in 1909 is not difficult to comprehend. "Many people consider Strauss insane," reported an American correspondent. "This bloody tale of revenge and matricide cannot appeal to the esthetic minds and souls." Heinrich Grünfeld, the well-known Berlin wit, was supposedly heard to remark, "If it must be Richard, then Wagner; if it must be Strauss, then Johann!" The composer himself, who—together with

Opera and Orchestral Music

In Philadelphia Holidays

THE Philadelphia Orchestra initiated its December concerts with those on the seventh and eighth, when Oscar Levant was an irreplaceable soloist in vigorous performances of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto and Gershwin's inescapable Rhapsody in Blue. Sibelius' Lemminkäinen Suite rounded out the program, conducted by Eugene Ormandy.

On Dec. 14, 15, and 18, Tchaikovsky's music held sway in the orchestra's program. Mr. Ormandy gave patrons of the Academy of Music a chance to hear his new concertmaster as soloist, when Jacob Krachmalnick played the Violin Concerto. Beauty of tone and smoothness of execution marked his playing, but a little more animation would have been desirable. Mr. Ormandy completed the program with his well-known and ever maturing reading of the Sixth Symphony.

The orchestra played its annual so-called Viennese program on Dec. 21 and 22. Besides a wide selection of waltzes and polkas by Johann Jr., Josef, and Eduard Strauss, Mr. Ormandy presented Mozart's F major Quartet, for oboe and strings, K. 370, with Marcel Tabuteau playing the solo part with his customary graciousness and distinction. Schubert's Symphony No. 3, in D major, and the premiere of Harl McDonald's Lullaby on a Viennese Carol were also given in this holiday program.

Maryann Filar was the soloist in the Dec. 28, 29, and 31 concerts. The young Polish pianist played Chopin's F minor Concerto with cold but impeccable pianism, and he was very cordially received by the large audience. Mr. Ormandy also offered Johann Christian Bach's lovely Sinfonia in D major, for double orchestra, and the Moussorgsky-Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition.

On Dec. 26, the orchestra presented the first of two special holiday Pop concerts in the Academy of Music. André Kostelanetz was the conductor on this occasion, playing such well-known fare as Gershwin's An American in Paris.

Grand opera for the month got off

to a good start on Dec. 5, as the Metropolitan Opera Company brought from New York its new production of Rigoletto. The Eugene Berman sets were justly admired, although one might be pardoned for some reservations on the final scene. Leonard Warren was in splendid voice and mood in the title role, and Hilde Gueden made her Philadelphia debut, as Gilda, with much success, negotiating cleanly and clearly the backstage high E at the close of Caro nome. Richard Tucker was the fruity-toned Duke, of florid appearance, and Alois Pernerstorfer's Sparafucile was new to Philadelphia. Alberto Erede conducted with fine effect a cast that also included Jean Madeira as Maddalena and Norman Scott as Monterone.

The Philadelphia-La Scala Opera Company's monthly contribution, on Dec. 7, was a very lackluster La Bohème. Helen Greco displayed a good lyric soprano but limited artistry and sense of theatre in the role of Mimì. Bruno Landi was Rodolfo, a provincial and old-fashioned performance on the part of this talented singer. Virgilio Lazzari's Colline, vocally past its prime, was filled with artistic and distinguished overtones. Angelo Pilotto was a rough Marcello and Stefan Ballarini a better than average Schaunard. Berenice Fontayne, a routine Musetta, completed the cast, which sang under the not too communicative baton of Carlo Moresco.

The Philadelphia Civic Grand Opera's offering for December was Faust, given on the twelfth with an intriguing cast. Jeanette MacDonald effected her Eastern operatic debut as Marguerite. When one admits that Miss MacDonald's voice was lacking in intrinsic beauty and volume, there was much to like in her performance. Some of her singing was clean and well phrased, and she presented a charming picture. The American soprano had carefully worked out the historic details of the role with Lotte Lehmann. David Poleri was a youthful and compelling Faust, singing much of the garden scene with

real beauty of tone. Martial Singher, in better voice than he has been in years, had a very good evening as Valentin, handling the pitched-down Avant de quitter ces lieux with great success. Raffaele Arie was a rather routine Mephistopheles; he was said to be suffering from a cold. Giuseppe Bamboschek conducted with enthusiasm. Choral ensemble, lighting, staging, and an obviously under-rehearsed orchestra left a good deal to be desired.

Recitals in Philadelphia during December were crowned by Victoria de los Angeles' first concert appearance in this city, at the Academy of Music on Dec. 6. The beauty and distinction of the soprano's singing made a profound impression. Interpretative limitations that were evident in German and French songs were put to flight as this finished vocalist turned to music of her native Spain.

The New Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia gave an all-Mozart program on Dec. 9 in the Academy. A large audience heard Ifor Jones conduct a Symphony in D major, which the program stated was having its first local performance, and a Divertimento in D major. The Curtis String Quartet, assisted by Joseph de Pasquale, violinist, was heard in the Quintet in G minor.

Despite certain crudities and shortcomings, the performance of Aida by the Philadelphia-La Scala Opera Company at the Academy of Music on Jan. 8 was one of the most communicative and compelling presented by a local company this year. Interest centered on Fedora Barbieri, who assumed the role of Amneris for the first time in this country. She sang and acted with a healthy assurance and breadth of conception that proved quite thrilling, especially in the Judgment Scene. The high B flats held no terrors for her, and there was something tigerish about her final catapulted imprecation at the retreating priests.

Herva Nelli, looking quite ravishing in a blue and silver costume in the Nile Scene, was an Aida whose vocalism evoked the night breezes during La tra foreste vergini, which she sang most beautifully. Francesco Battaglia replaced the absent Giovanni Mazzieri as Radames, offering an excellently sung third and fourth acts. Robert Weede's Amonasro was properly savage and vocally vibrant, and Tomaso Cavada made an impressive, resonant-voiced Ramfis. Lloyd Harris as the King, Francesco Curci as the Messenger, and Ellen Alexander as the Priestess completed the cast, which Carlo Moresco conducted.

—MAX DE SCHAUENSEE



Ben Greenhaus

Howard Harrington (left), manager of the Detroit Symphony, looks on as Paul Paray signs a contract at permanent conductor

Paray Named To Detroit Post

DETROIT.—The appointment of Paul Paray as permanent conductor of the Detroit Symphony has been announced by John B. Ford, Jr., president of the board of directors.

When the orchestra was re-organized last spring Mr. Paray was chosen as musical adviser and the first of the guest conductors for the 1951-52 season. He conducted the opening concert last Oct. 18.

Mr. Paray was conductor of the Concerts Padeloup from 1923 to 1928, of the Municipal Orchestra of Monte Carlo from 1928 to 1932, and of the Concerts Colonne from 1932 on. He made his American debut conducting at Lewisohn Stadium in the summer of 1939. After the war he returned for appearances with the Boston Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Pittsburgh Symphony. He has conducted major orchestras throughout Europe and South America and is scheduled to return for five months to the latter continent this year. He has been musical director of the Israel Philharmonic, and he was associated with the Paris Opéra for eight years.

New Works Planned By New York Company

During its spring season, from March 20 to April 27, the New York City Opera Company will add three operas to its repertoire—Alban Berg's Wozzeck, Gian-Carlo Menotti's Amahl and the Night Visitors, and Kurt Weill's The Beggar's Opera.

Der Rosenkavalier has been scheduled for opening night. Other works announced for performance are La Bohème, Madama Butterfly, La Traviata, The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, Cavalleria Rusticana, Pagliacci, The Love for Three Oranges, Manon, and The Dybbuk.

The repertoire, drawn up by Joseph Rosenstock, the new general director of the company, was approved by the board of directors on Jan. 15.

Milton Pollack, attorney for Laszlo Halasz, recently ousted director of the company, reiterated that the contract between the City Center and Mr. Halasz contains a clause providing that no part of the 1951 repertoire can be produced during this year or next without the services of Mr. Halasz.

Noting that many of the operas performed under Mr. Halasz's direction were included in the spring list, Mr. Pollack added that "if any decision has been made by the Center to violate the rights Mr. Halasz is given in his contract, we will take prompt action to enforce the contract."



FOUR LEARNED MEN

During the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, in Rochester, N. Y., from Dec. 27 to 29, Charles Warren Fox (right) of the Eastman School of Music, vice-president of the society, is visited by Richard S. Hill, of the Library of Congress; Gustave Reese, of New York University, president of the society; and Curt Sachs, also of New York University

Three Groups Meet at Eastman

ROCHESTER, N. Y.—Three organizations held conferences at the Eastman School of Music from Dec. 27 to 29. They were the American Musicological Society, the Music Library Association, and the Society for Music in the Liberal Arts College.

Speakers at the musicological gatherings included Vincent Duckles and Edgar H. Sparks, of the University of California; Putnam Aldrich, of Stanford University; Willard Rhodes, of Columbia University; Richard S. Hill, of the Library of Congress; and Edward Lowinsky, of Queens College. Arthur Mendel was chairman of a discussion on the principles of editing pre-eighteenth-century music.

At a joint meeting of the three organizations, Vladimir Ussachevsky, of Columbia University, and Martin Bernstein, of New York University, led a discussion on audio-visual devices. Manfred Bukofzer, of the University of California, reported on plans for a new bibliography of musical sources.

ORCHESTRA CONCERTS

Milstein Plays Beethoven Concerto

New York Philharmonic-Symphony.
George Szell conducting. Nathan Mil-
stein, violinist. Carnegie Hall, Dec.
20, 21, 22.

ALL-BEETHOVEN PROGRAM
Overture, Leonore No. 3; Symphony
No. 8; Violin Concerto

George Szell again proved himself one of the foremost Beethoven interpreters of our time. Other conductors may explore certain aspects of the symphonies, concertos and other orchestral works more profoundly than he does, but no one I have heard gives a more balanced, wholesome, and noble account of these scores. He brings out a multitude of refinements in Beethoven's orchestration that escape less perceptive conductors; he understands and believes in Beethoven's humanistic philosophy; and he renews each composition as he interprets it. Throughout this concert, one's thoughts were constantly upon Beethoven, not upon the performers. No higher tribute could be paid to their intelligence and ability.

The orchestra played the Leonore Overture No. 3 with a range of dynamics and cumulative intensity that I have seldom heard equaled. Mr. Szell captured the tremendous power of the work, which is an entire drama in itself. The tragic suspense, the triumphant outburst of the trumpet call, the wild jubilation at the end almost brought tears to one's eyes. Anyone who can make as familiar a piece as this so exciting is nothing short of a genius.

The Eighth Symphony has always

been one of Mr. Szell's happiest conceptions. It is all sweetness and light, as he conducts it, although not without Beethoven's rough and ready humor. By scrupulously observing the sudden shifts of dynamics, the changes of leading themes from choir to choir, the mischievous "false" entrances and unexpected modulations, he makes this wonderful symphony tingle with wit.

Despite the dampness of the evening, Mr. Milstein, by constant checking, managed to maintain his usual standard of well-nigh impeccable pitch. These difficulties did not inhibit the spontaneity nor impede the serenity of his playing in the Larghetto. He was completely at one with Mr. Szell about the interpretation of the music, and the interaction of soloist and orchestra had a rare subtlety of detail and emotional unity. Beethoven's Violin Concerto is still, after 145 years, the greatest we have. Performances like this one emphasize its unique majesty, tenderness, and classic simplicity.

In the Dec. 23 program Mr. Szell played the same works, adding The Prometheus Overture.

—R. S.

Morini Is Soloist With Philharmonic

New York Philharmonic-Symphony.
George Szell conducting. Erica Morini, violinist. Carnegie Hall, Dec. 27 and 28:

Suite No. 3, D major, Bach
Violin Concerto, E minor, Mendelssohn
Symphony No. 2, D major, Brahms

This evening began and ended robustly in the happy key of D

major, with a sprightly interlude in E minor that brought with it no tragic gloom. Miss Morini played the Mendelssohn concerto with unusual impetuosity and with considerable nervous tension. For once the opening movement was really "molto appassionato," as Mendelssohn marked it. Both soloist and orchestra plunged into the music in almost melodramatic fashion, but regained their equilibrium as the movement progressed. The slow movement, also, had a more serious cast than it usually receives, especially in the middle section. Miss Morini took the final movement terribly fast, as almost all virtuosos do, but she played it so fascinatingly that one forgave the headlong pace. The incandescence of her tone and the fire of her temperament made this an exciting interpretation.

During the first weeks of his visit, Mr. Szell kept the Philharmonic-Symphony leashed much of the time. But at this concert he let the orchestra play as loudly as it pleased. The trumpets in the Bach suite were almost deafening, and the last measures of the Brahms symphony were loud enough to wake the dead, but the performances were superbly vital. Mr. Szell captured the pastoral loveliness of the Brahms, giving it exactly the right flow and allowing the full riches of the score to sound. With a program of thrice-familiar classics he stirred the audience to a prolonged ovation.

—R. S.

Toscanini Conducts Program of Wagner

The Wagner program presented by the NBC Symphony under Arturo Toscanini in Carnegie Hall on Dec. 29 found both the maestro and his men at their best. The concert, which was televised, offered a series of per-



Nathan Milstein

Erica Morini

formances of overwhelming grandeur, poetry, and brilliance. Mr. Toscanini began with an interpretation of the Prelude to Act I of Lohengrin that expressed mystical exaltation in terms of the most exquisite sonorities. The Forest Murmurs from Siegfried was an ocean of sound, from the merest whisper to a tremendous fortissimo. Mr. Toscanini wrung the last drop of anguish from the Prelude to Tristan und Isolde, and raised the Liebestod to an atmosphere of transfigured serenity.

As if he were determined to prevent the rich program from becoming anti-climactic, he conducted Siegfried's death music and funeral march from Götterdämmerung with a breadth and heroic splendor that were irresistible. The Ride of the Valkyries from Die Walküre, dazzlingly performed, offered a welcome release from the emotional complications and tensions of the preceding works.

—R. S.

Hortense Monath Is Soloist With Philharmonic

Hortense Monath was soloist with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony in the Saturday evening concert (Continued on page 19)

RECITALS

Seymour Lipkin, Pianist Town Hall, Dec. 17 (Debut)

Although Seymour Lipkin had toured extensively throughout the United States and Europe since he won the Rachmaninoff Award in 1948, and had appeared in New York as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, this was his first recital here. The young pianist, who had studied conducting with the late Serge Koussevitzky, was also a member of the conductorial staff of the Berkshire Music Center last summer.

In many respects Mr. Lipkin's playing was remarkable, and the ways in which it was unsatisfactory were unusual. It was predominantly intellectual, sometimes to the point of seeming pedantic. Through the use of a slightly dry tone, discriminating pedaling, and judicious tempos, the notes always sounded crystal clear. The phrasing, dynamics, accentuation, acoustical balance, and presentation of the over-all structure had obviously been thoughtfully calculated, and his technically secure performances precisely reflected a thorough and musicianly examination of the music. The results were always worthy of attention, but, for the most part, they lacked spontaneity and warmth.

These qualities were, however, present to a large degree in Rachmaninoff's Variations on a Theme by Corelli and Bartók's Suite, Op. 14. Without losing his mental poise amid Rachmaninoff's lush romanticism or Bartók's rhythmic drive, he invested these works with enough color and emotional tension to make them sound genuinely beautiful. Both Bach's Italian Concerto and Beethoven's A major Sonata, Op. 101, were slightly hard tonally and didactic in the heavy accentuation and rigid pacing. In the middle movement of the concerto, the music was almost funereal and fell apart because the tone was even less



Seymour Lipkin Gold and Fisdale

sustained than that of a harpsichord. His efforts to color the tone in two Debussy études and Ravel's Toccata, which completed the program, were too cautious to be effective.

—R. E.

Gold and Fisdale, Duo-Pianists Town Hall, Dec. 19

Arthur Gold and Robert Fisdale had prepared a distinguished program, and their recital attracted a distinguished audience that included Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and other prominent figures in American musical life. The most novel novelty of the evening was the world premiere of Darius Milhaud's Concertino d'Automne, for two pianos, flute, oboe, three horns, two violas, and cello, composed this year. Daniel Saidenberg conducted it expertly. The concerto adds nothing to Milhaud's reputation; it opens with a lush and sentimental pastoral passage; the pianos burst in with a percussive, mechanically contrived episode; and the work meanders on to a finish that sounds old-fashioned in its faded sweetness. The music is expertly scored, but Milhaud shows little ingenuity in writing for the two pianos, and the whole work seems fearfully routine. Honor is due to Mr. Gold and Mr. Fisdale, however, for bringing us a new work by one of the world's foremost composers. The longeurs of the Milhaud work were soon forgotten in a superb performance of Stravinsky's

Concerto per due Pianoforti Soli (1935), which the pianists had prepared under the composer's supervision. This is unquestionably a masterpiece, opening a vista of new possibilities in two-piano writing. The sixteen years that have elapsed since it was composed have only added to its stature. The interpretation had the scrupulous accuracy, emotional objectivity, and intellectual precision with which Stravinsky always tries to conduct his own music.

Two of the works on the program, Erik Satie's En habit de Cheval (1911), and Georges Bizet's Jeux d'Enfants, were originally composed for piano duet. Although Mr. Gold and Mr. Fisdale played them at two keyboards they wisely left the music alone and refrained from thickening the texture. The Satie piece, made up of sections marked Choral, Fugue litanique, Choral, and Fugue de papier, reflects his studies at the Conservatoire. It is charming at first but grows tiresome, for Satie was an amateur in technique, at his best in little pieces like the Gnossiennes, Gymnopédies, Sarabandes, and other miniatures. The Bizet suite is uneven yet disarmingly lyric and full of refined touches of harmonization; it echoes Schumann constantly. Those who remember Massine's ballet know how full of theatre this simple music is, although it was not composed with such an end in view.

The concert came to a close with a stirring performance of Paul Bowles's Concerto for Two Pianos, Winds, and Percussion (1948), conducted by Mr. Saidenberg. This work, which the two pianists introduced to New York three years ago, is one of the breeziest, most entertaining compositions in the repertoire. Its evocations of South American and North American popular music remind one of Ravel, not in actual sound or texture, but in the tact and ingenuity with which they are blended with sophisticated elements typical of contemporary concert music. This score cries out for a dance setting, either in ballet or

modern dance, for it is rhythmically intoxicating.

—R. S.

David Gibson, Pianist Town Hall, Dec. 20 (Debut)

As nearly as was possible in a program top-heavy with works from the romantic repertoire, David Gibson, a young Alabama pianist, gave strong evidence of being one of the more promising talents among the present crop of pianists in their twenties. In selections that were ambitious in technical if not stylistic scope there were stretches of remarkable dexterity and interpretative sensitivity; and, in the more dramatic of Chopin's Preludes, Op. 28 (he undertook all 24), there were urgency and sweep enough to rouse all but the most apathetic listener.

However, Mr. Gibson, for all of his rare endowment, has not avoided certain pitfalls that have almost come to be expected of younger pianists preoccupied with romantic music. For one thing, he overpedaled a good deal—a particularly regrettable practice for one who, in agility at any rate, had so little to conceal. Another closely related ailment was his inclination to "top-line" the music at the expense of the inner voices.

The remainder of Mr. Gibson's program included Scriabin's Sonata, Op. 23, which he gave its due and more; two Bach-Busoni chorale preludes, which he played with a fine, deep tone; and a closing group made up of an étude tableau by Rachmaninoff and the Minuet and Toccata from Ravel's Le Tombeau de Couperin. Mr. Gibson played the Minuet exquisitely, but his performance of the Toccata suggested that the young man was, understandably, a little weary.

—W. F.

Trapp Family Singers Town Hall, Dec. 22, 5:30

The annual visit of the Trapp Family Singers has become one of the (Continued on page 12)



Bracegirdle and Barry

We might as well get one thing straight at the outset: as a general thing I don't approve of women's colleges, and as for Barnard College I have always heard it said on the best authority (i.e., girls who go to other schools) that Barnard girls are the dowdiest of all women's college students.

However, a release from the Barnard public relations office has gone a long way toward revising that opinion upward. It has to do with a lecture-concert at the college last month, when Lucyle (sic) Hook, an assistant professor of English, presented eighteenth-century material from what she called "early musical comedy and light opera by John Eccles and Gottfried Finger," performed by singers and instrumentalists from the neighboring Juilliard School of Music.

Now everybody who has read a book called Musical Comedy in America, by Cecil Smith, editor of this magazine, knows what we call musical comedy isn't possible without contemporaneity, and eighteenth-century England isn't contemporaneous. There is, just possibly, a logical or semantic flaw in that sentence; but let it go.

Anyway, Professor Hook's lecture-concert sounded like a real hot do. I didn't go, preferring to stay home and dream about the publicity release.

"Professor Hook's original research," it begins, "concerned Mrs. Anne Bracegirdle and Mrs. Elizabeth Barry, two famous English actresses of the early 1700s. The two actresses were fast friends and appeared in many plays together. Such playwrights as Congreve and Dryden recognized their popularity, and wrote plays especially for them."

"Mrs. Bracegirdle was celebrated for her virginity in an age when women of the stage were quite free with their favors. She would announce her unique state coyly in the prologue to each play she appeared in, and then proceeded to enact the role of a pure woman who is the foil to more worldly influences, but who wins out in the final act—still a virgin."

"Mrs. Barry, on the other hand, was a lusty woman of the world—the seventeenth-century counterpart of Hollywood's glamor queens. She was a celebrated Cleopatra on stage, and was equally famous off-

stage as the mistress of the Earl of Rochester.

"Dr. Hook considers that the most fascinating byproduct of her original research is the discovery of a tradition of musical comedy associated with Mrs. Bracegirdle, who had a fine lyric soprano voice." And so on, although Professor Hook's idea of what is fascinating isn't exactly mine.

But nobody can call that a dull publicity release—whatever Eccles' music turned out to be like. Maybe the person who wrote it is just another dowdy Barnard girl who got carried away by the verbal confluence of "virginity" and "Bracegirdle." Then again, maybe she went to Smith or Vassar.

More of Schubert

Some people just don't seem to be able to take a large view. Abba Bogin, a pianist, writes in again to complain about the ten symphonies of Schubert. He is "eager to advocate numbering of a composer's works," but he just doesn't seem to be able to cope with numberings that go as high as ten. This is understandable. I myself have trouble when large sums compel the use not only of all ten fingers but of all twelve toes.

On the whole, renumbering seems to appeal to Mr. Bogin, at least as an indoor sport. He is happy about the recount of Dvorak's symphonies that makes the New World Symphony No. 9. He also wants to renumber the Beethoven quartets so that the Op. 14, No. 1 sonata (which, in Mr. Bogin's words, "the composer himself reorchestrated for string quartet") could take its place in the list.

But when it comes to Schubert, Mr. Bogin doesn't seem to be able to admit the inclusion of the E minor fragment, just because it is a fragment (or, rather, a sketch), although he is willing to accept the Gastein Symphony as a Schubert symphony even though its orchestration is not by Schubert but by Joseph Joachim. "I am of the belief," he says, quite grandly, "that the Gastein Symphony is probably an orchestration of the Grand Duo, Opus 140." Well, bully for Mr. Bogin. It surely is—because the only Gastein there is was put together by Joachim out

of the Piano Duo. If you are going to get your opinions second-hand there's nothing like being in reputable company.

But why reject the E minor sketch? If a symphony that is a piano duo is a symphony why is a symphony that is an orchestral sketch not a symphony? "Never will I admit," the letter ends, "that Schubert wrote ten symphonies." A nice strong view, that, but not one that has factual accuracy to back it up. The simple fact is that Schubert obviously *did* write ten symphonies—two of which can't be played today in anything that could be called Schubert's completed form.

Whether you want to insert them in the standard numbering of Schubert symphonies is another question. Contrary to Mr. Bogin, I think it is silly to snarl everything up simply for the purpose of including problematical and non-existent works, even if MUSICAL AMERICA did call the Great C major No. 10. But Schubert did write ten symphonies.

Some people are so ungrateful when you try to give them the gentlest instruction.

Those Hungarians

Halsey Stevens, who is getting to be one of my most constant correspondents, wrote in after the Dec. 15 issue to say that I "have confused the Hungarian name situation even more than is customary." He goes on to quote from his forthcoming book on the music of Béla Bartók:

"According to Hungarian custom, the family name is *followed*, not preceded, by the baptismal name. This leads to confusion in countries where the reverse prevails . . . the western order is employed: *Béla Bartók* rather than Bartók Béla, which is correct in Hungary. But it is worth remembering that in at least one instance—Kodály's *Háry Janos*—we have accepted the Hungarian order instead of changing it to *János* (or John) *Háry*."

Having gotten in a plug for his book (which, if all of it is printed the way he typed that passage, should gain a nice hysterical quality from its plethora of italics), Mr. Stevens goes on:



Chicago Daily News

Both the Chicago Daily News and Life published this picture of people being buffeted by high winds during a holiday blizzard in Chicago. Neither identified the couple in the foreground; they are Mr. and Mrs. Wallingford Riegger, windblown at the corner of Michigan and Adams

"The Hungarian musicians you name have reversed their own names [whose names *would* they reverse anyway?] for practicality in western countries: György Sándor and Árpád Sándor would both be Sándor úr (the hell with Mr. Stevens' italics from now on) or Mr. Sándor—Sándor is the patronymic. A column or two back you refer to László Halász as Mr. Halasz; in Hungary he would be Halász László, but still Halász úr. In plain English he would be Mr. Fisher, as Ferenc Molnar would be Frank Miller; Junc Kovach (Kovacs), recent Naumburg winner, Miss Smith; and Liszt you would have to call Maestro Flour."

Thank you Mr. Stevens; it's all clear now.

Another letter aroused by the same article came from a girl named (as nearly as can be made out, and odd though the spelling is) Marylan Bollinger. She says that Louis Graveure is teaching in Baltimore at Bard Avon, "a combination Secretarial, Radio, Dramatic school which has decided to add a music department." She describes him as "quite active, very young looking; and can still sing circles around almost any tenor or baritone that you could mention." Other data: he has a "young wife and small daughter, age six." And that at 76.

Titbits

- A recent program at the Choreographers' Workshop contained a slip of paper with the following correction: "A typographical error was made in the spelling of André Guide. The correct spelling of this name is — André Gide." Dancers in particular should take heed — "let Gide be not your guide."

- An Orchestra Hall program in Chicago on Dec. 16 was called "Memories of the Lithuanian Opera." It included excerpts from operas by such well known Lettish composers as Verdi, Bizet, Wagner, Gluck, Halévy, and Gounod.

- The drum being used in the forthcoming Metropolitan production of Carmen is really a tamborin—the long, narrow Basque tabor—as specified in the score. Custom to the contrary, a tamborin is a far cry from the single-headed-with-jingles tambourine made familiar in nursery schools and by the Salvation Army. The current Metropolitan tamborin belongs to Fritz Reiner, who received it as a gift from Zaranz, province of Giupiezcoa, in the Basque country of Spain. It makes a nice rattly sound and doesn't jingle at all.

- Several weeks ago Louis Biancolli, in the New York World-Telegram and Sun, told how Mischa Elman asked young Michael Rabin who, in his estimation, was the ideal fiddler. The prodigy innocently replied "Jascha Heifetz." The triumph didn't last long. The day the item appeared, Abram Chasins, music director of WQXR, accompanied Mr. Heifetz to the railroad station. The cab driver gave Mr. Heifetz a speculative look. "Say," he asked, "aren't you Mischa Elman?"

Mephisto

RECITALS

(Continued from page 10)

habitual pleasures of the Christmas season in New York, and rightly so. In fact, the group's programs, attractive in their informality yet professionally performed, seemed more disarmingly unpretentious and better sung than ever.

As usual, the eight singers, directed by Father Franz Wasner, opened the program with a group of sacred works, which included music by Palestrina and Lasso, and a particularly choice canonic Alleluia by the eighteenth-century Philip Hayes. Christmas carols from many lands, sung around a table, with the stage lit only by lanterns and a decorated tree standing at the side, brought the afternoon to a close.

The middle portion of the program was centered more or less around young Johannes Trapp, whose voice had fortunately not changed yet. He sang two soprano solos—Augeletti, from Handel's Rinaldo, and Sheep may safely graze, from Bach's Birthday Cantata—with a purity of tone and long-breathed phrasing that were a delight to hear. The introduction to the Handel aria, played on recorders, a viola da gamba, and a virginal, and depicting "a place of delight, with fountains, walks and bird cages, where birds fly around and sing," was quite enchanting, and it was a real treat to hear a Bach aria accompanied by the same mellow-toned instruments. Johannes' recorder playing seemed more facile than ever in a bright little Partita ex Vienna, arranged by Father Wasner from some seventeenth-century Viennese dances.

The program was repeated the following afternoon at three o'clock.

—R. E.

Interracial Chorus Town Hall, Dec. 23, 5:30

Peter Mennin's The Christmas Story was given its first New York concert performance by the Interracial Fellowship Chorus in a program that also included Bach's Cantata No. 63, Christen atzet diesen Tag (sung in English) and two groups of traditional carols. The large amateur chorus was directed by Harold Aks and assisted by a small orchestra in the Mennin and Bach compositions.

The Christmas Story was commissioned by the Protestant Radio Commission in 1949, and it was given its first performance in a nation-wide radio broadcast on Christmas Eve that year. The music is more notable for its construction and orchestration than for its musical ideas, which tend to become monotonous. Mennin's setting of the Biblical text seems almost mannered in its determined syncopations. Mr. Aks's choristers found their way through its complexities fairly well, although they did run into one serious difficulty. Their most convincing singing, however, was in the a cappella carols.

—A. H.

Kenneth Amada, Pianist Town Hall, Dec. 26 (Debut)

Kenneth Amada, in his first New York recital, disclosed extraordinary potentialities. The young pianist faced an extremely demanding program—Brahms's Variations on a Theme by Handel; Chopin's Fantasy and Ballade in F minor; the Bach-Busoni Chaconne; Prokofiev's Seventh Sonata; and difficult items by Ravel and Scarlatti—without turning a hair. The ease of his playing was most impressive. His articulation was superb, his staccato crisp, his legato smooth, and his tone always ample and agreeably shaded.

Mr. Amada was obviously well schooled, but in interpretative matters schooling seemed to be a stumbling block for him. There was no hint of personal feeling in his perform-

ances. Every phrase was accurately placed in accordance with the written notes. Tempos, rhythms, dynamics were all there, but the playing was that of a brilliant student who had not learned to weigh emotional values for himself. But Mr. Amada still has time to develop the musical feeling to match his technical achievements.

—A. B.

Salzburg Marionette Theatre Town Hall, Dec. 28

The Salzburg Marionette Theatre brought to Town Hall the program it had offered at the 92nd Street YMHA on Dec. 16, which included Mozart's Bastien and Bastienne, and Eine Kleine Nachtmusik; a playlet, Young Mozart Visits the Empress; and a puppet ballerina dancing The Dying Swan. Three children's programs were given in the same hall on the morning and afternoon of Dec. 29. In these were two plays, Rumpelstiltskin and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and an opera, Mozart's The Impresario, not previously presented here.

—N. P.

Embry Bonner, Baritone Town Hall, Jan. 2

Embry Bonner sang a recitative and aria from an early Beethoven cantata in his debut recital program that also listed works by Handel, Sarti, Lagrenzi, Scarlatti, Duparc, and Verdi. A lieder group, three spirituals, and the first performances of Irving Mopper's Poor Old Lady and Eugene Broadnax's Message completed the program. Rudolf Schaar was the accompanist.

—N. P.

Lyell Barbour, Pianist Town Hall, Jan. 2

Lyell Barbour's Town Hall recital revealed a pianist of solid musicianship, a certain maturity, and admirable good will toward the music he undertook. All the same, it was clear that, simply as communication, the playing was not very stimulating. His reading of Mozart's Sonata in D major, K. 311, which opened the program, gave the work an unduly dry, rather trivial sound, and the exasperating length of Schumann's F sharp minor Sonata, Op. 11, was heard in a curiously lukewarm treatment that did little to solve the difficult problems of projecting this less-than-perfect work.

Mr. Barbour managed to suggest a good deal more of the style and spirit of Debussy's Preludes, Second Book, which he gave in its entirety. The playing was thoughtful, earnest, and fairly effective, but, as in the other works, it was distractingly prim.

—W. F.

David Tudor, Pianist Cherry Lane Theatre, Jan. 1

A piano recital of a highly unusual nature was presented by The Living Theatre when David Tudor played a program of avant-garde piano music by Pierre Boulez, Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman, and John Cage. Boulez's Second Sonata, the first work played, is quite conventional when compared with the other music of the evening; actually, however, it is a very complex and fiendishly difficult atonal composition. It is, nevertheless, a dynamic and comprehensible example of twentieth-century romantic musical expression. Mr. Tudor gave the sonata its first New York performance in a League of Composers concert last year.

Wolff's music, entitled For Prepared Piano, was composed vertically on the page, but advance publicity notes stated that it would be played horizontally. The idea is shocking; the sounds that resulted were only boring. The same adjective can be applied to Feldman's Intersection 2, which was written on graph paper,



Joseph Fuchs

Robert Shaw

and in which the composer prescribes the number of sounds to be played without specifying the exact sounds. The rhythm is also free "just as the time of entering an intersection between two red lights is free to a pedestrian."

Cage's Music of Changes, which "takes its title and compositional method from the Book of Changes, the ancient Chinese book for obtaining oracles by the tossing of yarrow sticks or coins," lasted more than half an hour, but the number of notes played during that time was not very great. The few changes this listener heard involved dropping the lid on the piano keys, beating on the under side of the piano with a mallet. The intellectuality in Cage's, Feldman's and Wolff's music may be high, but their idioms in these works are so eccentric that it is difficult to take the compositions seriously.

—A. H.

John Knight, Pianist Town Hall, Jan. 3

John Knight's playing was marked by superior intelligence and a live, if occasionally self-conscious, sense of style. To be sure, in his Town Hall recital, the technical means were sometimes tentative enough to mar his playing in an ambitious Chopin group and in Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata; but even here the playing had scope, and it all made sense musically.

The program opened with Ray Lev's rather bulky arrangement of the Vivaldi-Bach Concerto Grosso in D minor. Mr. Knight made some strikingly resonant sounds and some beautifully subdued ones, but the curiously static quality of the fugue made me wonder if he (or perhaps Miss Lev) had miscalculated the tempo. In Ravel's Valses Nobles et Sentimentales, Mr. Knight did his best—and it was truly exceptional—playing of the evening. The music had wit, proportion, and a lovely color, and he seemed to know all about it.

—W. F.

Joseph Fuchs, Violinist Town Hall, Jan. 4

Joseph Fuchs earned special commendation when he introduced a delightful new ensemble composition by Bohuslav Martinu to New York in this recital. The work, Serenade for Violin, Viola, Cello, and Two Clarinets, was superbly played by Mr. Fuchs; his sister, Lillian Fuchs, violinist; Bernard Greenhouse, cellist; and Robert McGinnis and Napoleon Cerninara, clarinetists. Its first, third, and fourth movements are full of engaging tunes and lively rhythms, while the second is characterized by pensive lyricism. The entire composition is expertly, and often wittily scored, and the writing for the two clarinets is especially effective.

Mr. Fuchs's solo playing was most effective in Strauss's Improvisation, a somewhat sentimental, but tasteful, movement from the Sonata in E flat, Op. 18. His approach was also well suited to Beethoven's Romance in F, Op. 50, and the more sustained passages of Bruch's Fantasia on Scottish Folk Melodies. He did not, however, toss off the bravura sections of the latter work with quite enough aban-

don to hold the listener's interest throughout their tiresome, showy measures. Mr. Fuchs played Bach's Sonata in C minor, No. 4, and the Mozart-Kreisler Rondo in G, K. 250, with the same sort of intelligence that characterized his playing of the other works, and he had superb collaboration in all of them from his accompanist, Artur Balsam.

—A. H.

Marialcina Lopes, Pianist Town Hall, Jan. 5, 3:00 (Debut)

Marialcina Lopes' playing in her New York debut recital was basically very good. The young Brazilian pianist, who has won scholarships and prizes at the Paris Conservatory, demonstrated an adequate technique. She always produced an unforced, singing tone, even in climactic passages; gave over-all continuity to the music; and adopted proper stylistic approaches to representative works by Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Ravel, and Villa-Lobos. Her performances still lacked polish in detail. She was careless about stating phrases distinctly or diffident about placing them in bold relief against subsidiary material. As a result the music frequently lacked clarity, although she was actually pedaling very carefully.

She was at her best in Mozart's D major Sonata, K. 576, sensitively and more cleanly phrased than other works; Chopin's F minor Ballade, tonally warm and rising and falling in a single, well-planned arch; and Villa-Lobos' Impressões Seresteiras (Country Impressions), a long, lush piece to which Miss Lopes brought rich coloration and considerable emotional intensity.

—R. E.

Paul Bellam, Violinist Carnegie Hall, Jan. 6, 5:30

Paul Bellam devoted a good part of his program to contemporary music in this recital, his first in New York since 1947. He opened the recital with Dello Joio's Variations and Capriccio, and closed it with a group that contained Bloch's Nigun, Stravinsky's Pastorale, and Wladigeroff's Vardar (Rhapsodie Bulgare). With Joseph Tekula, cellist, he played Villa-Lobos' Deux Choros (two serenades for violin and cello) and Toch's Divertimento (duo for violin and cello). Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and Chausson's Poème completed the program.

Mr. Bellam's performances were accurate and tasteful, and they told of conscientious preparation and good coaching. What they lacked was evidence of personal concern for the music. While Mr. Bellam varied tone colors occasionally and employed rubatos judiciously, he did these things so mechanically that they did little to enliven his performances. Both Mr. Tekula and Arpad Sandor, the accompanist, did their respective jobs efficiently.

—A. H.

Robert Shaw Chorale Carnegie Hall, Jan. 6

Robert Shaw conducted the first in his Choral Masterwork Series of seven concerts in Carnegie Hall on Jan. 6, introducing to the United States Béla Bartók's Cantata Profana: The Enchanted Deer. The Robert Shaw Chorale was accompanied by the RCA Victor Symphony. The program opened with Mozart's Requiem; the Bartók cantata was also prefaced by Debussy's Trois Chansons de Charles d'Orléans and Ravel's Trois Chansons.

The performance of The Enchanted Deer revealed what a superb choral instrument Mr. Shaw has forged for his interpretative purposes. In numbers the ensemble is not large, including between thirty and forty singers. But the voices are so well trained, so expertly balanced, that Mr. Shaw can obtain any degree of loudness or soft-

(Continued on page 16)

Shankar and Company Give New York Season

UDAY SHANKAR, his wife, Amala, and a troupe of splendid dancers and musicians opened a two-week season at the ANTA Playhouse on Christmas night. During their visit they presented two programs, one week of each. It was two years since Shankar had been with us, and he returned in better form than on his last visit. His wife, a lovely and vivacious dancer, and the company performed with unflagging verve. This first program put the emphasis upon the happier aspects of Hindu folk and religious lore. The costumes were gorgeous, the incidental singing effective, and the accompanying music fascinating. Tagore once said that Eastern music is meant to soothe, whereas Western music is meant to excite; but Hindu music is no less functional in the theatre for all its repose and endlessness of spirit. The solo interlude by Misra, Kamalesh, Santosh, Vairavan, and Arobind was as stirring in its way as any jam session, and Kamalesh's solo on the drums was as virtuosic as a break by Krupa.

Perhaps the most winning composition on the program was the Tilotama, danced by Amala, Raghavan, and Sankaran. It is based on the legend of the beautiful nymph created by Brahma out of "bits of beauty taken from all the species of natural phenomena" to trap two demon brothers to their destruction in a duel. Magnificently costumed and vividly danced, it took the audience by storm. As Indra, Lord of the Heavens; as Kartikeya, the golden son of Shiva; and as Shiva himself, Shankar danced with his familiar magic. The exquisite repose and liquid beauty of his movement were unforgettable.

Amala was captivating in Nirikshan, a solo displaying "the mental reactions of a peasant girl conscious of the constant gaze of a stranger" and bearing it with amusing equanimity.

Pramila Arjun, a long group work based on an old legend, with Shankar, Amala, Annam, Yogam, Sreelekha, Bokul, Raghavan, Sankaran, and Asoke, is also a highly interesting composition. It concerns a beautiful young queen who rules a strange land inhabited by handsome damsels, who are resolved not to fall in love with males. When Arjun, the hero, encounters the queen, a situation somewhat like that in Jerome Robbins' *The Cage* arises, but with a very different outcome. Pramila, far from strangling Arjun, requests him "to live in her land as her partner." Shankar has never offered a more varied and colorful program.

—R. S.

New Dances Added To Shankar Repertoire

From Jan. 2 to the end, on Jan. 6, of their two-week engagement at the ANTA Playhouse, Uday Shankar and his company offered a program that included six dances not previously seen here. Four dances and two musical interludes were retained from the program that opened the engagement.

Of the new items the longest and most elaborate was *The Great Renunciation*, requiring the services of the entire company. It tells how Prince Siddhartha (Shankar), the young Buddha, discovers among his

people sickness, old age, death, and the holiness of asceticism, and renounces his blissful life in the palace with Queen Yasodhara (Amala) to seek through self-denial and "pious pains" joy for the rest of mankind. The intrusion of realistically pantomimed characters—a sick man, an old man, and a holy man—provides a jarring note in the midst of symbolic and highly stylized movement, although its validity cannot be questioned by this reviewer. The whole seems less smoothly patterned than Shankar's other works. However, the final scene between the Prince and the Queen, in which she describes a portentous dream and he bids farewell to her as she sleeps, is quite expressive and moving. As in the rest of the program the costumes were indescribably beautiful and the music constantly astonishing in its endless variety of sonorities, rhythms, and dramatic devices.

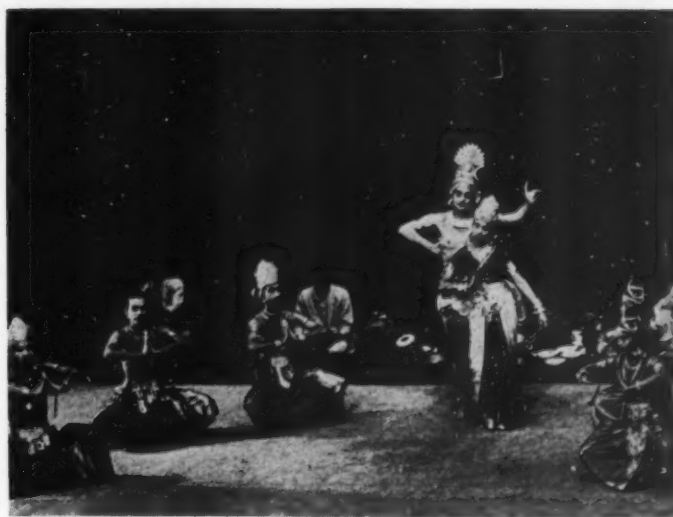
A Punjabi folk dance, for the entire company, and Manipuri, an example of a special school of dancing, performed by four girls—Annam, Yogam, Sreelekha, and Bokul—are blunter and less sinuous in movement and as immediately winning as anything in the repertoire. Hunter was an energetic solo, danced by Raghavan, in which the incidents were depicted with a pleasantly childlike simplicity and explicitness. Darpan, a solo for Shankar, was a too coy bit about a boy dancing to the mirrored image of a girl—a counterpart to the more successful Nirikshan danced by Amala. The last of the half-dozen premieres was an amusing, slightly clownish work called *Peasant Couple*, performed with great good nature by Shankar and Amala.

—R. E.

Katherine Litz 92nd Street YMHA, Dec. 23, 3:00

Katherine Litz is a sensitive artist, with a pronounced gift for lyricism and a vein of hilarious comedy. The lyricism is apt to become monotonous, as this concert demonstrated, but the humor is so richly inventive that it should play a more prominent role in her programs. The final dance in this recital was a novelty, *The Glyph*, from a suggestion by Charles Olson, danced before a screen from a painting by Ben Shahn and to an appropriately zany score by Lou Harrison. The costume is a piece of fabric that distorts and elongates the body at will, creating weird, surrealistic figures, often headless or armless. Not since Martha Graham's tragic *Lamentation* has a costume of this kind been so resourcefully used. And the movement is so wonderfully senseless that it must be seen; words cannot indicate its inspired madness. Another psychologically interesting piece was a study in frustration and compulsion, danced principally in a chair, to Ravel's *Alborado del Gracioso*. Miss Litz's beautiful *Fire in the Snow*, a study in purity of line and perfect symmetry of design, is already familiar to New York audiences.

Several of the dances, however, such as *Blood of the Lamb*, *Chorales for Spring*, *Suite for a Woman*, and *Thoughts Out of Season* were improvisational in form, lacking in dynamic tension, and rather heavily projected. The arm movements, especially, became manneristic in these



In the course of their two-week engagement at the ANTA Playhouse in New York, Uday Shankar and his wife, Amala, appeared in the leading roles of the Hindu dance drama *Pramila Arjun*, a work based on legend

compositions. Miss Litz too often neglected to use space interestingly or to create an organic design. Her costumes were dowdy in some of the dances, but excellent in *The Glyph* and in *Fire in the Snow*. David Tudor's accompaniments were unusually sensitive and rhythmically alert.

—R. S.

Choreographers' Workshop 92nd St. YMHA, Jan. 13, 3:00

Two works stood out in the Choreographers' Workshop's first program for the 1951-52 season—Robert Joffrey's *Persephone* and Bill Hooks's *Folk Suite*.

Persephone tells the familiar legend (Continued on page 24)

New Ballet by Massine In Sadler's Wells Premiere

By A. V. COTON

THE latest ballet by Leonide Massine, Donald of the Burthens, was produced for the first time by the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden on Dec. 12. The Donald in the title is a woodcarrier (hence the "burthens") who makes a bargain with Death, who enables him to cure the sick and so win great prestige. Donald, out of pity for a suffering king and love of children, cures the king and teaches the children to pray. In doing this last, he breaks his bargain. Death claims him, and then leads a danced wake in his honor. Although such a legend could be found in any European folklore tradition, here it is treated as peculiarly Scottish, with a score by Ian Whyte (the Scottish BBC's conductor) and décor by Scotland's best-known easel painters, Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde.

The result is a ballet stiff with competence from choreographer, composer, and designers. The medieval settings are pleasantly pictorial, reminding on Scottish fourteenth-century architecture against a landscape dominated by gaunt monoliths. The costumes are a free translation of historical accuracy into balletic suitability. Whyte's score, straightforward and episodic, is based largely on traditional dances, handsomely written up for a big orchestra. A bagpiper is introduced (rather ineffectively) in the wake scene, as is a maker of "mouth-music"—a man calling a tongue-breaking rhythmic continuo in Gaelic for some passages of ensemble dancing.

Donald (Alexander Grant) and Death (Beryl Grey) carry all the dramatic interest; half-a-dozen secondary characters and a corps de ballet of fifty dancers build up the ballet into one of Massine's most

spectacular efforts. Beryl Grey, in all-over blood-red tights, was given an individual movement style filled with writhings, extremely sinuous torso flexions, and gyrating progressions. Her role is an impressive creation, so impressive that it leads to the faultiness of the dramatic structure. For Donald, although he carries the story and dances practically non-stop until he is killed off, is weakly characterized. He is never a seemingly opponent for this majestic and terrifying medieval concept of Death.

The scenes are filled with well-wrought choreographic patterns, including mourning dances, country dances, sword dances, children's ensembles, etc., all beautifully and effectively built, maneuvered, and dissolved at need. The repertory of footwork in Scottish dancing is normally contrasted with fine and simple hand-and-arm movements, although Massine has not seen fit to use it in full. In the end, the technical mastery that a Scots traditional dancer can show is not echoed in this mass choreography. The sword dance, for example, makes an unusual stage spectacle but has none of the bravura that it has in a thousand open-air performances in Scotland each year.

The story unfolded smoothly and understandably, making even less necessary than usual a 300-word synopsis in the program. Donald of the Burthens is a work to admire for its mass formations, ballables, and quartets, and for Miss Grey's memorable creation as Death. But the legend, music, décor, and dance-forms have not been fused together to make an important Scottish ballet. Massine might again have transfused a living folk-dance style into an integrated theatrical style, as he did with Spanish dance forms in *Le Tricorne* over thirty years ago. But he did not.

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Midseason Report On the Metropolitan

THE second Metropolitan season under the general management of Rudolf Bing has now run almost half its course. While no more than an interim report is warranted until returns are in for the whole season, the character and profile of the new Metropolitan are already quite discernible.

A marked upswing has taken place in public interest and confidence in the opera company. Two years ago mention of the Metropolitan was a signal for a yawn from many serious musicians and most members of the general theatregoing audience. Today the Metropolitan has regained the respect of the musical community, and thousands of new patrons are sampling Mr. Bing's new productions. The mass audience that hailed last year's *Fledermaus* with joy appears to have transferred its affection this winter to Alfred Lunt's staging of *Così Fan Tutte*, with the result that the Mozart opera has become a popular hit for the first time in American history.

This shift in attitude on the part of both professionals and non-professionals has resulted in large measure from the acumen with which Mr. Bing has gone about the task of replacing the seamy and tattered productions that formerly disgraced the Metropolitan stage—and still do, in certain works that have not been done over. Out of 23 operas in the 1951-52 list, eight are equipped with productions made either this year or last. Two more, Gianni Schicchi (which has been greatly revised) and Salome (which has been relighted by its designer, Donald Oenslager) have been considerably improved without the construction of new settings. Several other productions retained from the old régime are more presentable than the pre-1950 Metropolitan average. This leaves a few that look really dismal, not too indefensible a portion of the total, except that such popular pieces as *La Traviata*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *La Bohème* are among the offending items.

The casting of the individual operas is not conspicuously better than it was in the Johnson-St. Leger era, and boners of miscasting, or at least of mediocre casting, occur about as often as they used to. But the musical values of the performances have been sharpened by a constant and growing emphasis on ensemble singing. The orchestra plays with far more sensitivity and beauty of tone than it used to, partly because the amount of orchestral rehearsal has been increased, and partly because all the conductors are men of musical stature and exigent artistic aims.

The roster of signers has been refreshed by the addition of a variety of singers from home and abroad. Here, however, Mr. Bing's record is somewhat disappointing. It is true that he has brought to the Metropolitan such distinctive artists as Victoria de los Angeles, Hilde Gueden, Fedora Barbieri, Elisabeth Hoengen, Mario del Monaco, and Hans Hotter. But by no means all of his importations have quite justified his hopes for them, and it is disquieting to reflect upon the sizable number of European artists he has passed by who are more gifted than many of those he has engaged.

Perhaps it is his preoccupation with new productions that has led Mr. Bing to adopt, whether deliberately or not, a policy that is split right down the middle. Nearly all the resources of the company go into the new productions, and into a few revivals that Mr. Bing considers especially significant. In

these productions rehearsal time is as generous as possible, and the original casts are retained intact, or nearly so, throughout the season's series of performances (although recent performances of *Rigoletto* and *Aida* have somewhat controverted this rule). But the shopworn *La Traviata*, *Manons*, and *La Bohèmes* are used as a dumping ground for a shifting miscellany of singers.

If we are patient for two or three more years, however, these orphaned members of the repertoire may in their turn receive the cherishing warmth of new productions, and the Metropolitan may outgrow its split artistic personality.

An Indispensable Haven for the Arts

SOME of the most promising and important contributions to the arts in recent years in New York have been made not in Broadway theatres but at the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association at Lexington Avenue and 92nd Street. That institution may justly claim to have kept young artists alive with hope and opportunity; for many of our most gifted modern dancers have been able to give concerts there and to keep in touch with the public, long after rising costs made it economically impossible for them to even think of Broadway recitals.

The collapse of the modern dance project at the New York City Center was a bitter disappointment to both artists and public, but fortunately another door was still open. Critics and public alike find themselves traveling up to 92nd Street surprisingly often to look for the most vital work in the field. It is no exaggeration to say that most of the important compositions by younger modern dancers in recent years have had their New York premieres there.

When William Kolodney became director of the 92nd Street YM and YWHA educational department sixteen years ago, he visioned a far-reaching service to creative artists as an important phase of his work. In art, music, dance, drama, and poetry, the YM and YWHA under his leadership, has made itself indispensable to the artistic life of the city and, indirectly, to the nation. With Doris Humphrey as head of the dance school, and with an advisory committee for concerts and auditions headed by Louis Horst, the institution has been open to all, offering training, encouraging talented artists to create, and providing a cultural exchange where new and challenging compositions in all fields could be seen, heard, and appraised.

It was at the YM and YWHA that Oliver Smith and Lucia Chase saw Herbert Ross's ballet, *Caprichos*, which they took into the repertoire of Ballet Theatre. The new modern dance works produced at the American Dance Festival at Connecticut College in New London have not had to be put on ice for years, while their creators scraped together and borrowed enough money to present them under brutally expensive conditions in downtown New York theatres. The YM and YWHA has offered an excellent theatre, the Theresa L. Kaufman Auditorium, and carefully organized series with a loyal and enthusiastic public. The peculiar economic conditions of the American theatre today put a premium on rapid commercial success. But the importance of such institutions as the YM and YWHA cannot be overemphasized, for experiments of today may be successes of tomorrow.

Musical Americana

ON March 29, four days after his 85th birthday, **Arturo Toscanini** will conduct Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in a concert by the NBC Symphony for the benefit of the New York Infirmary Building Fund. It will also be his final appearance for the season with the orchestra. **Kirsten Flagstad** arrived in this country on New Year's Day, following a seven-month tour of Europe. Her first appearance this season in the United States is her scheduled recital in Carnegie Hall on Feb. 1. **Wilhelm Furtwängler** has accepted the permanent directorship of the Berlin Philharmonic, which he conducted until the end of the second World War.

Among the artists who will be heard in a benefit concert for the Tuberculosis Preventorium for Children, on March 18 in Town Hall, are **Licia Albanese**, **Robert Merrill**, and **Giuseppe di Stefano**. **Sir Thomas Beecham** announced upon his arrival abroad the Queen Mary on Jan. 4 that he will probably bring the Royal Philharmonic to the United States in 1953 for a 75-concert tour. **Herbert Graf** has been asked to stage the production of *Wozzeck* that **Dimitri Mitropoulos** will conduct in Milan at the beginning of June. **Georgy Sander** became the father of a boy on Jan. 2. **Witold Malcuzyński** was among the recitalists heard in London during December.

Because of illness, **Gregor Piatigorsky** has been forced to cancel his concert engagements for the remainder of the music season. **George London**, who made his debut with the Metropolitan Opera Company this fall, flew to Europe on Dec. 14 to make his debut at La Scala in Milan, in *Fidelio*, and to rejoin the Vienna State Opera. He will return to this country late in January.

In his Carnegie Hall recital on Jan. 15, **Rugiero Ricci** is scheduled to give the American premiere of **Bernd Zimmermann's** *Sonata for Violin Alone*.

One musician was on the list of honors issued by King George VI in London on New Year's Day—**William Primrose**, who was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire. **Katherine Dunham** and her company of 32 dancers, singers, and musicians, opened their second London season on Jan. 8. **Hilde Gueden** will make ten appearances in five roles with the Vienna State Opera, after which she will return to the Metropolitan Opera Company in February.

Gladys Swarthout took a two-week vacation in Florida preparatory to beginning the second half of her seasonal tour, on Jan. 20 in Washington, D. C. Her engagements will take her to the West Coast and back, ending with appearances with the Wheeling Symphony on April 23 and 24. **Lawrence Tibbett** also spent the holidays in his new Florida home, having recently completed his tour as Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*.

When he was soloist with the Rochester Philharmonic on Nov. 21, **Rudolf Firkusny** was heard in the first performance of **Howard Hanson's** new *Fantasia on a Theme of Youth*, for piano and strings. Rochester was also the seat of a three-day celebration, beginning on Jan. 7, in honor of its native son **William Warfield**. The mayor designated the first day of the celebration as William Warfield Day.

Leon Fleisher was married in New York on Dec. 30 to Dorothy Druzinsky. The bride's father is a former violinist with the St. Louis Symphony, and her brother is a harpist with the Pittsburgh Symphony. **Angna Enters**, who has just returned from her eighth London season, which lasted two weeks, will have an exhibition of new paintings at the Newhouse Galleries in New York beginning Feb. 2. **Dorothy Warenskjöld** was guest soloist in the traditional Christmas Eve program staged in Union Square by the Down Town Association of San Francisco.

Lucy Kelston recently took the leading role of Imogene in a production of Bellini's *Il Pirata* during a festival at the composer's birthplace, Catania, Sicily. She also appeared in London with **Ebe Stignani**, **Hans Hopf**, and **Tancredi Pasero** as soloist with the BBC Symphony, under **Sir Malcolm Sargent**, and with the Royal Philharmonic, under **Franco Capuana**. Another American soprano who has sung in opera in Italy this winter is **Franca Duval**, who sang in *Cimarosa's* *Il Credulo*, at La Scala in Milan.

Leslie Frick, now residing in Mexico, D. F., has made numerous appearances with the Xalapa Symphony, some of them conducted by **Hermann Scherchen**, and on broadcasts over the government-sponsored radio network. **Anne Bollinger**, **Giuseppe Valdengo**, and **Louis Persinger** will be heard in a benefit concert in the Colony Club ballroom on behalf of the maintenance fund of An Hour of Music, Inc.



Left: Maria Jeritza as she appeared twenty years ago at the Metropolitan Opera in Suppé's *Donna Juanita*. Right: In the Berlin Staatsoper's revival of Mozart's *Cost Fan Tuttle* were (above) Mmes. Marherr and Heidersback and Willi Domgraf-Fassbänder, Lotte Schöne, Helge Roswänge, and H. Fuchs

WHAT THEY READ TWENTY YEARS AGO

Holiday Gaiety

Spurred on by last season's outstanding success of von Suppé's *Boccaccio*, the Metropolitan Opera produced the famous Viennese composer's *Donna Juanita* for the first time . . . in a new version by Artur Bodanzky. The music and book are less good than those of *Boccaccio*, but the occasion was a similar triumph for Maria Jeritza in the title role. Dorothee Mansk's *Donna Olympia* was the only other distinguished performance. The sets by Joseph Urban were admirable; Dr. Niedercken-Gebhard's direction of the stage was noteworthy. In our opinion the new practice of giving some of the dialogue in English (when a work is sung in German), and employing slang in so doing, is a reprehensible one. And this operetta is inferior to others by the same composer and by Johann Strauss.

Social Notes

Lawrence Tibbett and Mrs. Jennie Marston Burgard were married in New York on New Year's Day. . . . According to a letter from Felix Weingartner, the conductor was to be married "within a few days' time" to Carmen Studer, young Swiss pupil of his.

Tales Restaged

Of the many wonders associated with the name of Max Reinhardt in the theatrical annals of Berlin, none has probably awakened more interest or created more discussion than his recent spectacular staging of Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* at the Grosses Schauspielhaus. His first endeavor was to eradicate the traditional complexities and ambiguities of the libretto by the inclusion of episodes derived from or suggested by the original Hoffmann stories. By stretching here and shrinking there he managed to relegate the three basic scenes of the original to the picturesque position of stained-glass insets in a rather translucent rose window. . . . An introductory scene included a patient little piebald pony, a moth-eaten droshky, and a good measure of local Berlin dialect. Another innovation was the repetition of the taproom scene before each tale. The last scene was also extraneous, and showed a backstage view of the old Berlin Royal Opera during a performance of *Stella's* ballet. There were thirteen scenes in all. The notable galaxy of singers included Göta Ljungberg, Jarmila Novotna, Rosette Anday, Adele Kern, and the Italian coloratura Tatjana Menotta (who sang the role of *Olympia* in her native tongue), Georges Baklanoff, Hans Fidesser, and Leo Schützendorf. Leo Blech made the necessary musical expansion.

Debutant

Göta Ljungberg [making her debut as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* at the Metropolitan] has three desirable qualities which have been absent from the Metropolitan for some time—she knows how to walk across the stage, she knows the decorative

value of the lines of the human body, and she realizes that synchronization of gesture with the music is to the advantage of both.

Depression Hits

Throughout Germany the fate of famous musical institutions is being threatened by the exceedingly difficult economic conditions. Since the opening of the season, rumors have been persistently rife concerning the impending doom of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra because of the city's manifest inability to maintain the municipal subsidy without reductions. Material cuts have also been made in the subsidies for the Berlin Symphony, and the Society of the Friends of Music has enough subscribers for only four concerts instead of the usual six. Concerts in the opera houses have also been reduced. Meanwhile, the Berlin Broadcasting Orchestra has been stepping to the fore, as has the so-called Orchestra of Unemployed Musicians, organized in 1931, which made its initial appearance at the Municipal Opera under Fritz Stiedry.

Every Man His Own

During a performance of Lehar's *Schön ist die Welt* at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna on New Year's Eve, the scene shifters went on strike. The composer, who was in the audience, went backstage and assisted in setting the scenes for the succeeding acts.

On The Front Cover:

RUDOLF FIRKUSNY, born in Napajedla, Czechoslovakia, on Feb. 11, 1912, entered the Brno State Conservatory when he was six. He studied piano with Vilem Kurz and composition with Leos Janáček and Josef Suk. At the age of ten he made his debut with the Prague Philharmonic. His first United States tour was in 1938, his second in 1941. Since then he has played all over the Western Hemisphere, made European tours, and appeared in Israel and Egypt. In this country he has been soloist with all the leading orchestras—often twelve in a season—and some of them three and four years in a row. Once he was heard in New York five times within one month with three orchestras—the Boston Symphony, the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra. Last season he played three times at Carnegie Hall—with the Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, and Philadelphia Orchestra. This year he plays four times with the Philharmonic. He has given the world premieres of concertos by Martinu, Hanson, and Menotti and reintroduced to America much Czech music. Columbia Records issues his recordings. (Photograph by R. Morawetz.)

RECITALS

(Continued from page 12)

ness and any type of vocal color he desires.

The Enchanted Deer contains some of the most evocative pages Bartók wrote, together with some passages that sounded a bit experimental at first hearing. It concerns an old Roumanian folk tale about a hunter who has raised his nine sons to follow in his footsteps. One day the sons venture into an enchanted part of the forest and are transformed into stags. Their father, searching for his sons, encounters the stags and is about to shoot at them when the largest (his favorite son) tells him who they are. The father pleads with them to return home, but they explain sadly that they must forever wander in the forest. At the close the story is recapitulated. Bartók himself wrote the Hungarian text, of which Mr. Shaw, with the aid of Alex Harsanyi, had fashioned an English version.

The Enchanted Deer was composed in 1931. It calls for double chorus, with tenor and baritone solos, and an orchestra including three flutes with piccolo, three oboes, three clarinets with bass clarinet, three bassoons with contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings. Despite its complex contrapuntal texture, highly dissonant harmonic idiom, and coloristic scoring, the work is always clear and emotionally direct. William Moonan, tenor, sang the solo of the favorite son, one of the most exacting in the modern repertoire, courageously and well; and Benjamin De Loache, baritone, sang the father's solos with dramatic intensity.

The vocal sound in the Debussy and Ravel a cappella choruses was exquisite, and the pitch well-nigh impeccable. The French text was not always clear. Incidental solos were sung by Lucille David, contralto; Louise Natale, soprano; Doris Oker-son, contralto; Marjean Moore, soprano; Richard Wright, tenor; and Raymond Keast, baritone.

The most notable qualities of the performance of the Mozart Requiem were accuracy and clarity. All of the contrapuntal detail was faultlessly exposed, and Mr. Shaw conducted the dramatic choruses with great vigor. Yet the singing lacked emotional spontaneity. The chorus seemed if anything too unified, too rigidly trained. This impersonality and coldness were happily dispelled in the other performances of the evening.

—R. S.

New Friends of Music Town Hall, Jan. 6, 5:30

This concert for the New Friends of Music subscription audience was played by the Budapest Quartet. The distinguished group offered two Beethoven quartets—the C minor, Op. 18, No. 4, and the B flat major, Op. 130—and one of the relatively infrequent performances in New York of Samuel Barber's Quartet in B minor, Op. 11. To the B flat major Quartet they appended Beethoven's original final movement, the immensely tough and thorny Grosse Fuge, Op. 133.

The group's playing was always musical and comfortably free of any hint of technical insecurity, although the rich sonority they almost always aimed for occasionally verged on coarseness of tone, and not only in the Grosse Fuge. Their interpretations were serious and authoritative without being ever dull. The Barber quartet, which this reviewer was hearing for the first time, was most impressive in the way its musical ideas

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Camilla Williams



Edmund Kurtz

stood up under the strain of being heard in close juxtaposition with the music of such a titan as Beethoven. It seemed extremely well played.

—J. H., JR.

Ben Jones, Pianist Town Hall, Jan. 6

In his first recital here since his debut two years ago, Ben Jones began auspiciously with a beautifully inflected performance of the Gluck-Sgambati Melody. In the slow movement of Schumann's G minor Sonata, Poulenc's Fourth Nocturne, and Chopin's C minor Nocturne the pianist handled the melodic material with equal sensitivity, molding the phrases lovingly and maintaining a fine tone.

When the music was faster than moderato, however, his performances became problematic. The tone grew hard, rhythmic accents were insufficiently strong to give the music shape, and some tempos were miscalculated—Debussy's L'Isle Joyeuse was taken so fast it lost all meaning and led Mr. Jones into technical trouble. However, Vincent Persichetti's excellent Third Piano Sonata was extremely well played all the way through. The performer's obvious sympathy for and concern with projecting the sonata's material kept the presentation clearly in focus, whether the music was slow or fast.

—R. E.

Camilla Williams, Soprano Town Hall, Jan. 8

Camilla Williams' Town Hall recital had all of the tangible ingredients of a distinguished musical event. The soprano offered musicianship of the first magnitude, a pretty voice, and a tasteful program that she understood to the last detail. With these advantages in mind, one was constantly expecting something extraordinary to happen. Quite mysteriously, it never actually did. It was an interesting, well-average, but strangely lukewarm affair.

Miss Williams opened with a group of arias by Mozart and Arne, which she sang in excellent style. Her Italian, however, was unconvincing, and there was a certain bulkiness in her treatment of the coloratura passages. To the Schubert group that followed she gave considerable distinction, although the effect of Gretchen am Spinnrade is not achieved simply by hurrying. A French group, which included Saint-Saëns' Le Bonheur est chose Légère, Chausson's Chanson Perpétuelle, and a short work of Rameau's, was accompanied by members of the Hartt String Quartet. The music gave a good deal of pleasure. In these works and in a striking group of Respighi songs Miss Williams did her most elegant, distinguished work. Borislav Bazala provided excellent accompaniments.

—W. F.

Beverly Somach, Violinist Carnegie Hall, Jan. 8

Beverly Somach, who will be seventeen on the seventeenth of this month, has had a notable career. The violinist, who made her debut at Times Hall at the age of twelve, has since appeared twice at Town Hall and once at Lewisohn Stadium. Her immense natural aptitude and considerable technique have gained her a

growing reputation, to which the large audience that welcomed her at her first Carnegie Hall recital attested. The event itself was something of a disappointment, however. But this is not to say that Miss Somach had lost her extraordinary gift in the transition from child prodigy to young lady. Indeed, it was in magnificent evidence in the adagio of Mozart's Concerto in A major and in the allegro of Bach's unaccompanied Sonata in A minor. But, by and large, the violinist's delivery seemed inhibited in comparison with her easy projection at previous appearances.

Two factors seemed responsible for Miss Somach's reserve. The modern works on the program—Hindemith's Sonata in C and Bartók's Rhapsody in G—did not suit her very well, although she played both of them with sincere musicianship. The violinist had not calculated the acoustics of the hall to her best advantage, with the result that the opening of the Bach sonata, for example, sounded rather weak. In sum, though it was a recital well above the average, if not always up to the standards legitimately expected from a violinist of such exceptional endowments.

—A. B.

Herbert Tichman, Clarinetist Ruth Budnevich, Pianist 92nd Street YMHA, Jan. 8

Herbert Tichman and Ruth Budnevich offered one of the most interesting recital programs of the season, with a major novelty, Paul Hindemith's Concerto for Clarinet, in its first New York performance. To play the piano reduction of the orchestral score as lucidly as Miss Budnevich did was a major achievement, and Mr. Tichman performed the intricate solo part capably. The music is entertaining without being trivial. Each of the four movements is relatively brief and to the point; and the middle ones, a scherzo in irregular rhythmic patterns, and a lyric intermezzo marked Ruhig, are especially appealing. Some of this music is matter-of-fact, but all of it is beautifully knit.

The two artists opened the program with Weber's Variations for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 33, a work of delightful freshness and ingenuity. Mr. Tichman played Igor Stravinsky's Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo in a manner that kept the structure clear. In Milhaud's Sonatine (1927) Miss Budnevich did not maintain the perfection of ensemble that she did elsewhere, perhaps because it followed her solo performance of Schubert's Sonata in A minor, Op. 143, in the last movement of which she suffered a memory slip. But in Brahms's Trio in A minor, Op. 114, in which George Koutzen performed the cello part, both Miss Budnevich and Mr. Tichman were in best form. It is a pity that this late work, one of Brahms's profoundest, is so seldom heard.

—R. S.

Edmund Kurtz, Cellist Carnegie Hall, Jan. 9

The second half of Edmund Kurtz's recital was devoted to contemporary music—Prokofiev's Sonata in C major, Bloch's Méditation Hébraïque, and Ginastera's Pampeana No. 2. In these works the cellist displayed his talents most impressively. The long, lyric line of the Bloch essay and the first movement of the sonata were played lovingly and with sensitive tonal shadings, and the sparkling witticisms of the second movement of the sonata were expertly projected. The rhythmic diversities of the Ginastera display piece, which is less tiresome than many such items, were dispatched adroitly by both Mr. Kurtz and Arthur Balsam, his efficient accompanist.

The first half of the program was less suited to Mr. Kurtz's temperament. The classic simplicity of Pergolesi's Sinfonia in F major and

Boccherini's Adagio and Allegro was less apparent than it might have been in performances of these works by less ardent cellists. Bach's unaccompanied Suite No. 5 further reflected Mr. Kurtz's penchant for fervid interpretations.

—A. H.

Bach Aria Group Town Hall, Jan. 9

With distinguished instrumental and vocal soloists, a capable chorus and orchestra, and a program of Bach cantatas and arias, this concert could not fail to delight the capacity audience that heard it. The outstanding performance was that of the magnificent Trauer-Ode, the funeral music composed by Bach in 1727 upon the death of Queen Christina Eberhardine, wife of August the Strong, king of Saxony. The queen was especially beloved in Leipzig, a Lutheran stronghold, because she had remained a Lutheran when her husband became a Roman Catholic in order to become eligible for the throne of Poland.

Bach poured the full force of his genius into this work. The opening chorus is as noble in style as it is bold in harmonic coloring, but the most astounding passage is the recitative for alto with orchestra accompaniment, Der Glocken bebendes Getön (The bells' palpitating tone). This music anticipates Moussorgsky, Strauss, and other wizards of tone painting by a century and a half.

Jennie Tourel performed the notable feat of singing both the soprano and alto arias, with an appropriate change of quality and placement. Jan Peerce was the tenor soloist and Norman Farrow the bass soloist. The Choral Art Society and Orchestra, conducted by William Jonson, acquitted themselves very well.

Among the evening's manifold pleasures were the beautiful obbligatos played by Robert Bloom, oboist; Bernard Greenhouse, cellist; Maurice Wilk, violinist; and Julius Baker, flutist. Erich Itor Kahn was a model of discretion in his role as continuo player at the piano.

In the Cantata No. 42, Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats, which opened the program, the solo honors were taken by Mr. Farrow, who sang the aria, Jesus ist ein Schild der Seinen, with great fullness, flexibility, and emotional conviction. If there is a more admirable Bach interpreter among the basses of the day, I have not heard him. Miss Tourel and Mr. Peerce also contributed dramatic fervor as well as vocal brilliance to the performance. A group of solo arias followed. Mr. Peerce sang the tenor solo, Quoniam tu solus sanctus, from Bach's Mass in G major; the aria, Es dünket mich, ich seh, dich kommen, from Cantata No. 175, for tenor, cello and continuo; and the aria, Erschütt're dich nur nicht, from Cantata No. 99, for tenor, flute and continuo. Miss Tourel sang Erbarme dich, from the St. Matthew Passion, so eloquently that one was willing to forego the heavier, deeper voice for which it was conceived. There was only one drawback to this concert: it was too short. One left the hall still eager to hear more music of such incredible beauty and dramatic power.

—R. S.

Guy Lasso, Pianist Carl Fischer Hall, Jan. 9 (Debut)

Guy Lasso, a young French pianist, gave a debut recital which included a Bach chorale; a Schubert impromptu; Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata; works of Chopin, Liszt, Debussy; and a Rhapsody of his own contrivance.

Mr. Lasso showed a knack for getting around on the keyboard, and his playing was calculated for achieving the really grand manner. Nevertheless, what emerged was so ridden with bad pedaling and bizarre distortions of tempo and dynamics that it

(Continued on page 18)

Tchaikovsky's Pique Dame

Has NBC-TV Production

By QUAINANCE EATON

FOLLOWING closely on its impressive success with Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, the NBC Television Opera Theatre produced Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* on Jan. 3, in the customary hour from 11 p. m. to midnight. Peter Herman Adler, the music and artistic director of the series, conducted; Samuel Chotzinoff was producer and Charles Polachek associate producer and television director. David Poleri, Winifred Heidt, Margaret Zambrana (who used to call herself Margarita), and Ralph Herbert took leading roles. The opera was sung in English, as are all of the series, in a translation by Jean Karsavina. Settings were by Carl Kent, costumes by Liz Gillelan, and lighting by R. W. D., who never allows more than his (or her) initials to be published.

With the best will in the world—for this project needs and deserves all the sympathy and understanding it can get—it is impossible to call this particular production a step forward. Coming so soon after the impact of Menotti's expertness in staging and direction, this slow-moving vehicle seemed like a Russian ox-cart beside a fleet gazelle.

Mr. Adler said that in compressing the story he went back to the original Pushkin novel instead of to the libretto the composer's brother, Modest Tchaikovsky, drew from it. How much Pushkin and how much Tchaikovsky are met and mingled in this version is not important except to partisans of either; what is important is the net result for an American audience.

This gloomy tale, with its obsessions, murder, suicide, and madness, should be made palatable—or at least acceptable—by the witchery of music. There are many pages of Tchaikovsky's score which are treasureable. Many have been retained. But by introducing the device of a doctor (presumably in an insane asylum), who relates the history of the hero's madness at several points in the story, the music was reduced to a series of episodes, connected by talk, instead of being a unified opera score. This tendency to use narrative instead of music with action is taking hold of this company too firmly. Granted it can be a saving grace in clarifying a long operatic tangle that has to be straightened out and clipped to fit an hour, when almost all action and motivation are left to the narrator very little of interest happens on the screen. In this NBC production *The Queen of Spades* came to seem one long tenor solo, with the other elements passed over too briefly.

Here is the plot, and any discrepancies between this and the Tchaikovsky original may, according to Mr. Adler, be laid at Pushkin's door. A flashback from the opening scene in the asylum (where the hero was played by an actor, Guy Tano, who resembled Mr. Poleri convincingly enough), shows a gambling scene where Tomsy relates the story of the old Countess (nicknamed the Queen of Spades), who is supposed to have the secret of three cards that will invariably win. The army captain, Gherman, an insatiable gambler, resolves to possess the Countess' secret and makes love to the old lady's niece and companion, Lisa. (Incidentally, the

use of the spelling "Gherman" seems a little far-fetched. It is the Russian phonetic spelling for Herman; why not simply spell it "Herman," as all other translations do? Perhaps it is easier to sing the "Gh" than the "H," but to me it seemed a useless affectation.)

Lisa admits her lover to the castle late at night when the Countess is coming home from a party, musing on the past, and being made ready for bed by her maids. Gherman appears, threatens the old lady with a pistol, and causes her death by shock. Lisa, learning the true reason for Gherman's attentions, commits suicide. Gherman secludes himself in his room, has visions of the Countess lying dead; he sees her ghost, who tells him the secret—he should play the three, seven, and ace. Madly exhilarated, he goes to the gaming room and wagers all his money on the three cards. Winning on the first two, he turns up what he sees as the ace—but it is the Queen of Spades. He goes mad.

Even with truncation, too much talk, and too little action, the production might have been sharpened and pointed with first-class direction. But the singers, with the exception of Mr. Poleri at certain moments, walked through their parts. Miss Zambrana, the Lisa, in a horribly unbecoming boudoir cap, voluminous robe, and shawl—why a shawl, for a young girl, even on a cold night?—had little to do but listen to Mr. Poleri's outpourings.

Miss Heidt, in a mask or makeup that thoroughly (and properly) camouflaged her natural attractiveness, and done up like a mummy in yards and yards of clothes, robes, and scarves, was utterly wasted in what might have been a really terrifying and pitiable impersonation. There were moments when the formidable old woman made a deep impression, as in the brief verse of the French song of reminiscence she was allowed to sing, but for the most part she was so badly lighted as to be hardly visible. It is possible to suggest darkness without complete obscurity. It was done very cleverly in *Amahl*; why not here?

Mr. Poleri should have had better direction. He has appeared to much greater advantage on the stage. Even in the earlier television version of *Carmen* he showed more of the inner tension of an actor. Close-ups (necessary for television, as I have repeatedly claimed) were not too fortunate in his case, because of tricky shadows and unflattering camera angles. Still, for all these handicaps, he sang very well. Miss Zambrana seemed off microphone in some moments, for she sang in profile a good deal, and the deflected sound muffled the words and thinned her tone. Mr. Herbert was excellent in Tomsy's few appearances—a good bit of acting, which stood out. In smaller roles, practically unidentifiable, were Kenneth Smith, David Garen, Elsa Rosner, Florence Forsberg, Dolores de Puglia, Frances Paige, Alice Fraser, Carole O'Hara, William Upshaw, Michael Pollock, Paul Ukena, Suigmund Mezcy, John Kuhn, Boris Tumarin, and Carl Don.

Mr. Adler conducted with evident affection for the score. I only wish it were possible to secure even balances so that it would not be necessary to turn the volume down at home for every fortissimo.



NBC Photo

David Poleri, as Gherman in the NBC television production of Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*, lies in his barracks after murdering the Countess. Peter Herman Adler conducted the opera, and Charles Polachek directed.

The company moved to its large studios in Brooklyn for this production, with consequent expansion of playing space. This permitted several different settings. They were excellent—what could be seen of them.

The next NBC opera production will be Puccini's *Il Tabarro*, on Feb. 7, to be followed by portions of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, on March 6.

Arturo Toscanini's second television appearance this year was a great improvement over the first. The producers had evidently taken thought and realized the fact, often stressed here, that the conductor himself is the only real focal point for video. The camera was away from him for only three moments in the all-Wagner concert of Dec. 29—once to show the flute and other winds in the Forest Murmurs, once to show the brass in Siegfried's Funeral Music, and again in the Ride of the Valkyries. The camera placement was better and the camera work smooth, sensitive, and unobtrusive. Kirk Browning was the camera director, as he had been for *Amahl*. The concert is reviewed in the orchestra columns, but it should be said here too, that the magnificent playing came over the sound track most impressively. The telecast was sponsored, unobtrusively, by the Reynolds Metal Company.

Television has come to other orchestras through the country, with satisfying results. The Indianapolis Symphony, Fabien Sevitzy, conductor, began a series of seven concerts on Dec. 18, televised from the studios of WFBM-TV, from 8 to 8:30 p. m. CST. The series, which is entirely sponsored, is suspended in January because of the orchestra's tour, but will be resumed in February.

In Kansas City, Hans Schwieger is in charge of a program called Philharmonic Fun, over WDAF-TV. The Kansas City Philharmonic conductor presides over a panel of eight youngsters, with members of the orchestra as guests. Questions and answers fly thick and fast, and everybody has a good time and learns something about the orchestra.

The Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air, which returned to ABC radio on Dec. 18, will be televised beginning Jan. 15.

Philharmonic Announces Young People's Contest

The Young People's Concerts Committee of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York has announced a composition contest for boys and girls under the age of seventeen. Original works of three- to five-minute duration may be submitted. The winner will be awarded a record library valued at \$300. If the judges

so decide, the prize composition will be given a performance in the orchestra's young people's series, broadcast over radio station WQXR, and published by Carl Fischer. Scores should be submitted by March 10 to the society, 113 W. 57th St., New York 19.

Merrill To Rejoin Metropolitan in Spring

A written apology from Robert Merrill to Rudolf Bing, general manager of the Metropolitan Opera Association, has paved the way for the baritone's return to the company at the end of the present season. Mr. Merrill had failed to fill his commitments with the Metropolitan during the 1951 spring tour, in order to make a motion picture in Hollywood, and he was dismissed from the company by Mr. Bing. He was not re-engaged for the current season.

In acknowledging Mr. Merrill's apology, Mr. Bing stated that he was "willing to forget the past." As a result of recent negotiations, the singer will rejoin the company in time to go on the annual spring tour, which begins in April, and will be on the Metropolitan's 1952-53 roster of singers.

Mr. Merrill's letter to Mr. Bing, dated Dec. 4, is in part as follows: "Having had ample time to reflect upon the unfortunate incident last spring, I express to you now my deep regret for my action and the inconvenience it caused you and my colleagues.

"I know what the Metropolitan has meant to me, as well as to many others. I realize the complex nature and many problems of its operation. I realize that the success of the Metropolitan depends greatly on the sincere co-operation, loyalty and self-discipline of its artists. I also understand your action in striking my name from the roster of the Metropolitan for not participating in the spring tour, and appreciate that you had no other alternative.

"Singing at the Metropolitan has been my life. Should you be willing to consider my reinstatement, which I most sincerely desire, let me assure you that your trust in me will not be misplaced."

In his reply to the singer three days later, Mr. Bing wrote:

"I am glad to have your letter of December 4th. To admit one's mistakes the way you have done is a sign of moral courage and decency. "I shall be willing to forget the past. Please come to see me so that we may discuss your rejoining the Metropolitan Opera next season."

Mr. Merrill's last appearance at the Metropolitan was as Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* on Feb. 23, 1951.

RECITALS

(Continued from page 16)
was difficult to recognize some of the most familiar passages. To make matters worse, he pounded so relentlessly that the top register of the piano was out of tune before the evening was half over.

—W. F.

Fernando Valenti, Harpsichordist Town Hall, Jan. 10

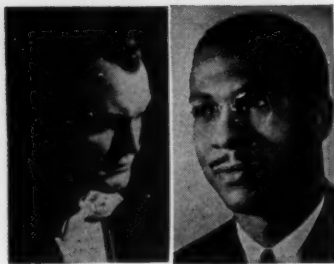
A group of six Scarlatti sonatas found Fernando Valenti at his most inspired. The harpsichordist summoned more imagination and achieved a greater variety of effects here than elsewhere in his program. His playing was always marked by elegance and grace, if not by any great degree of personal involvement, and it was always evident that serious thought and conscientious preparation had gone into his performances. Items by Mozart and Byrd, Rameau's Gavotte with Variations, and Vincent Persichetti's Sonata for Harpsichord were all capably done. Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, though, was rather timidly played.

The Persichetti sonata, dedicated to Mr. Valenti, was played for the first time. It has one or two ideas, mainly rhythmic, which amble along without apparent direction. It does, however, contrive some pleasantly startling harpsichord effects with well-placed, if conventional, dissonances.

—A. B.

Anahid and Maro Ajemian Carnegie Hall, Jan. 11

Anahid and Maro Ajemian, violin and piano team, brightened Carnegie Hall with musicianly performances of sonatas by Schumann, Mozart, and Debussy as well as by giving the first



Fernando Valenti Leonard de Paur

performance of Lou Harrison's Suite (1951). The young ladies displayed a variety of musical accomplishments—a meticulously calculated ensemble, nearly flawless execution, and an evident desire to serve the music through understatement. However, the scope of their playing was small, and neither of them made sounds big and resonant enough to fill the large hall.

Mr. Harrison's Suite is divided into seven sections which are scored for solo violin and solo piano, with an orchestra of two flutes, oboe, harp, celesta, "tackpiano," tam-tam, two cellos, and contrabass. It is monothematic, diatonic, and its evocation seemed to be of certain Eastern musics. The orchestration made delicate, pretty sounds, and there were some appealing tunes. Mr. Harrison conducted, and the members of the orchestra played attractively.

—W. F.

Margaret Pardee, Violinist Town Hall, Jan. 11 (Debut)

Margaret Pardee, in her first New York recital, disclosed the basic ingredients of acceptable violinism. In a program that centered around Brahms's Sonata in D minor and included works by Vivaldi, Mozart,

Chausson, and others, the young violinist dealt competently with the various styles and displayed an essentially solid technique, despite occasional flaws in intonation. Aside from scattered phrases of poetry and passion, however, her performances showed that she had not yet learned to deal with music on personalized terms.

—A. B.

Richard Farrell, Pianist Town Hall, Jan. 12, 3:00

Richard Farrell's recital was refreshing in that it was characterized by the pianist's serious and selfless concentration on the music he played rather than on the exhibition of his own skills and attainments. The 25-year-old New Zealander offered perceptive and straightforward accounts of Beethoven's Sonata in E flat major, Op. 7; Schumann's Fantasy in C major, Op. 17; Debussy's Suite Bergamasque; and Prokofiev's Sonata No. 7. His interpretations of the Beethoven sonata, the final movement of the Schumann Fantasy, and the first movement of the Prokofiev sonata were projected more effectively than the others, in which his playing was somewhat small in scale for Town Hall. Mr. Farrell's playing never overwhelmed the listener; it did, however, often command his respect and admiration.

—A. H.

Anna Russell, Comedienne Town Hall, Jan. 13

Anna Russell repeated her program for a capacity audience drawn to it by the enthusiasm of the elite group who had attended her debut performance on Nov. 27. The humor of the program held up well until intermission time, but the second half, consisting of less pungently satiric and more vaudevillian materials, came as something of an anticlimax.

—C. S.

de Paur's Infantry Chorus Carnegie Hall, Jan. 13

The 32 veterans of World War II who make up de Paur's Infantry Chorus once again showed themselves to be one of the finest groups of the kind. Under the direction of Leonard de Paur, founder of the group, the chorus sang without accompaniment and from memory a varied program that included songs by Dai-Keong Lee, Ivan Langstroth, and Kurt Kenan; folk songs of Latin America; songs from World War II; Negro spirituals and work songs; and a closing group of religious items. Several of the numbers were performed in arrangements by Mr. de Paur.

A versatile and well-disciplined group, the chorus was just as convincing in the breezy, plucked-strings effects of a Brazilian Gaucho Song as in the muted grief of a Chinese Soldier's Elegy or in the simple, religious faith of a Bach chorale. Pitch, vocal balances, and dynamic shadings were ever a delight to the ear. Of the featured soloists, Luther Saxon, tenor, and Elijah Hodges, bass, should be singled out for special mention.

—A. B.

New Friends of Music Town Hall, Jan. 13, 5:30

The inspired performances of three Beethoven quartets at this concert by the Loewenguth Quartet made one realize how irreparable the loss to the world of music would have been, had the serious automobile accident suffered by the members of the ensemble near Rochester last year been more tragic in its outcome. It was the first time that the quartet had appeared in New York since that mishap, and the four musicians have never played more memorably to my knowledge. Each of their interpretations was a revelation of Beethoven's musical thought; and each seemed to pierce into the composer's heart

and to show us what a wealth of compassion and moral courage he poured into his chamber music.

Technically speaking, the playing was astounding. It was not invariably polished or immaculate, because the artists were concerned with far profounder matters than polish. Where Beethoven wrote passages of superhuman power and breadth, as at the beginning of the Quartet in E flat, Op. 127, they played them in the same spirit. Yet in such movements as the scherzo of the Quartet, Op. 18, No. 2, in G major, their performance was as deft and graceful as a fencing match. Between this work and the tremendous Op. 127 they had placed the "Harp" Quartet, Op. 74, in E flat. One could follow the deepening of Beethoven's genius in these three masterworks. The slow movement of Op. 74 was transformed into a musical confession. Only in the religious works of Bach, perhaps, does one encounter music at once so intimate and so timeless and perfect in form.

—R. S.

NAACC Concert Town Hall, Jan. 13

The National Association for American Composers and Conductors presented, in its third concert, new music of a startlingly broad stylistic gamut. David Van Vactor's Suite for Two Flutes was an inordinately repetitive joke about the instruments themselves; however, it was skilfully set for the wind duo. Henry Holden Huss then accompanied Ruth Kemper in his own Legende, for violin and piano—a sincere, disarmingly naive reflection on the musical practices of the nineteenth century. Harold Triggs, in his Piano Sonata, American Gothic, seemed to have given a good deal of thought to the music of Charles Ives, a composer whose unique blend of disparate musical materials lends itself badly to imitation.

The second half of the program offered meatier fare. Joseph Goodman's Sonata for Flute and Piano was admirable for its fine, tidy workmanship, its handsome shape, and lucid texture. It was abounding in long Hindemithian lines of considerable beauty, although it tended to a certain coarseness of harmonic style. Otto Luening's Suite for Cello and Piano was a curiously eclectic and dispassionate work. Its five movements were a puzzling blend of musical populism and textural experimentation. Whatever else it is, its effect was original and provocative. Mr. Goodman and Mr. Luening accompanied their own works, and Mildred and John Wummer, flutists; George Finkel, cellist; and Vera Brodsky, pianist, gave earnest performances.

—W. F.

OTHER RECITALS

MARY RATOFF, soprano; Town Hall, Dec. 27.
MARY BAMBERY, pianist; Carnegie Recital Hall, Dec. 30.
ZOILA GALVEZ, soprano, and CHARLES EVERETT, tenor; Town Hall, Dec. 30.

Plaque at Metropolitan Honors Otto Kahn and Wife

A bronze plaque in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Otto H. Kahn has been placed in the parterre foyer of the Metropolitan Opera House. Mr. Kahn served as chairman of the Metropolitan Opera Association from 1911 to 1931, and after his death his widow was a member of the board. The plaque is inscribed: "In grateful memory of Mr. and Mrs. Otto H. Kahn and in recognition of their lifelong interest in the Metropolitan Opera Company. Through their generosity the new productions of 'Don Carlo,' season 1950-51, and 'Cosi Fan Tutte,' season 1951-52, were made possible."

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ORCHESTRAS

(Continued from page 10)

cert conducted by George Szell on Dec. 29. Her playing in Mozart's B flat major Piano Concerto, K. 595, was clear in tone and clean in execution. It was not always steady, however, and Mr. Szell was occasionally taken by surprise by Miss Monath's arbitrary changes in tempo. The remainder of the program was devoted to the Overture to Weber's *Der Freischütz*, Debussy's *La Mer*, and Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*, all of which were repeated from previous concerts.

—A. H.

On Sunday afternoon, Dec. 30, Mr. Szell replaced Bach's Suite No. 3 and Brahms's Symphony No. 2 with two other standard works, the Overture to Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. Both pieces were given enticing performances. Mozart's overture was played in a lively and spirited manner, although possibly a shade too fast. The interpretation of the Tchaikovsky work was on the whole on the classical side. Mr. Szell was concerned more with the work's general dynamic structure than with easy effects. Between these pieces, Erica Morini repeated the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto.

—A. S.

Maryan Filar Soloist With Philadelphia Orchestra

Philadelphia Orchestra. Eugene Ormandy, conductor. Maryan Filar, pianist. Carnegie Hall, Jan. 1:

Sinfonia in D major for Double Orchestra, Op. 18, No. 3... J. C. Bach
Piano Concerto in F minor... Chopin
Pictures at an Exhibition... Moussorgsky-Ravel

The Philadelphia Orchestra ended its first concert of the new year in a blaze of glory with a truly magnificent performance of the Moussorgsky-Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition. The work took on a barbaric splendor under Mr. Ormandy's direction as he pointed up the darker colorations of Ravel's extraordinary orchestration. The instrumental tone was so rich and glowing in the lower registers and so bitingly brilliant in the upper ones that the work seemed more vivid than ever. With a sure hand the conductor piled climax upon climax in the final Great Gate at Kiev section, achieving an awesome and exciting mass of sound. It is hard to imagine a better performance of the work than this, even by the Boston Symphony in its palmiest days under the late Serge Koussevitzky. Mr. Ormandy and his men were rewarded with cheers from the audience.

The soloist of the evening, Maryan Filar, made his New York debut. A native of Poland who was imprisoned in various concentration camps during the war, Mr. Filar made his American debut in the summer of 1950 at Chautauqua, and some of his recordings were released here last year. His playing in the Chopin concerto was technically clean, even in the finale, which he took at an unusually rapid pace. The rather brittle tone he produced, effective only when cutting its way through the accompanying orchestral fabric, went hand in hand with an impersonal interpretation that had neither warmth in the slow movement nor glitter in the surrounding movements. Only in the declamatory unison runs in the slow movement did he project any dramatic tension or feeling.

The opening number in the concert, a double-orchestra sinfonia by the youngest of J. S. Bach's sons, is one of six written about 1776 and published in London. Of several versions extant, Mr. Ormandy chose the one he thought most authentic and tran-

scribed it for a larger ensemble. The music is ingratiatingly witty—even the themes of the Andante seem slyly turned—and the manner in which the material is tossed back and forth between the two ensembles is unhackneyed and inventive. The conductor's arrangement did not seem too overblown, particularly in the lucid, balanced, and restrained performance it received in this concert.

—R. E.

Contelli Makes Debut With Philharmonic-Symphony

New York Philharmonic-Symphony. Guido Cantelli conducting. Westminster Choir, John Finley Williamson, director. Carnegie Hall, Jan. 3, 4 and 6:

Four Pieces (arranged by Giorgio F. Ghedini).... Frescobaldi
Magnificat (arranged by Giorgio F. Ghedini).... Monteverdi
Symphony No. 5.... Beethoven

Having saluted Guido Cantelli as one of the most gifted young conductors of our time and a great musician, at the time of his American debut with the NBC Symphony in January, 1949, the writer found keen pleasure when he again confirmed that enthusiasm at his debut with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, three years later. For he exhibited the same glowing lyric intensity, intellectual power, and clarity of technical purpose and command. He had chosen a program that looked very unwise on paper, and he triumphed with it through sheer power of conviction and inspiration. The first half was given over to music that was unfamiliar and that could have become boring in less perceptive hands; and the second was devoted to a hard-ridden symphony that has unhorsed more experienced masters than Mr. Cantelli. He interpreted the Beethoven symphony so fiercely that many members of the audience shouted their enthusiasm at the end, just as Beethoven intended that they should when he wrote the tremendous climax of its final pages.

The four pieces by Frescobaldi transcribed by Ghedini are a toccata for organ; a canzone for organ or cembalo; a toccata for organ (Avanti la Messa della Domenica (Before Sunday Mass)); and another canzone for organ or cembalo. The arrangements contain adept imitations of baroque organ registration, as well as some frank excursions into modern orchestration, and they wisely avoid harmonic anachronisms. Mr. Cantelli evoked the mystical splendor of this music with sensitive skill.

His interpretation of the Monteverdi Magnificat was equally lofty; but in this transcription for modern orchestra and large, seven-part chorus Ghedini has not been able to avoid sonorities and romantic climaxes that seem foreign to the texture and spirit of Monteverdi's music. The emotional power of the work was intact, even though the style of the transcription might be challenged. The chorus sang with noticeable effort and foggi-ness of tone, but Mr. Cantelli never let the expressive tension sag. After the free rhythms and intricate polyphony of Frescobaldi and Monteverdi, the four-square rhythms and harmonic simplicity of Beethoven had unusual impact.

—R. S.

Toscanini Conducts Weber and Franck Works

On Jan. 5 Arturo Toscanini led the NBC Symphony through a program that included the Overture to Weber's *Der Freischütz*; *Psyche* and *Eros*, from Franck's *Psyche*; the dances from Rossini's *William Tell*; and Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. Mr. Toscanini's readings of the Weber and Franck works were especially compelling—the former a miracle of dramatic tension, and the latter a characteristic example of romanticism stream-

(Continued on page 20)



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ORCHESTRAS

(Continued from page 19)

lined, and without sentimentality, as only Mr. Toscanini can project it. The William Tell excerpt was given its full measure of charm, and it had also a most immaculate clarity. However, even Mr. Toscanini was able to bring only partial life to the Brahmsian turgidities of Elgar's old-fashioned exercise in variation form.

—W. F.

Music Education League Winners Town Hall, Jan. 6, 2:45

The Music Education League, with the Little Orchestra Society, presented the 1951 winners of its concerto and vocal competitions on this occasion. Thomas Scherman was conductor for the program, which opened with Arensky's Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky. Morey Ritt, winning pianist in the junior division, then played two movements of Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto in G minor. The fifteen-year-old Miss Ritt was the youngest of the soloists and the most promising. She played with spontaneity and élan as well as technical facility. The other winners, all of them well-schooled youngsters, were Sylvia Rosenberg, who played Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor; Alice Richmond, soprano, who sang two operatic arias by Mozart; and Joseph Schwartz, who was heard in Beethoven's Piano Concerto in C minor. Virgil Thomson's suite, The Plow That Broke the Plains, completed the program.

—A. B.

Three Soloists Appear In Pension Fund Concert

New York Philharmonic-Symphony. George Szell conducting. Leonard Rose, cellist; Nathan Milstein, violinist; Myra Hess, pianist. Carnegie Hall, Jan. 7:

Overture to Der Freischütz...Weber
Variations on a Roco Theme for cello and orchestra, Op. 33...Tchaikovsky
Symphonie Espagnole...Lalo
Overture to Oberon...Weber
Piano Concerto, No. 4, G major...Beethoven

The three distinguished soloists, who gave their services for the Orchestra's Pension Fund, made this a concert of high order, with each performance adding a facet of great beauty. Mr. Rose's tone and musicianship in the sugary Tchaikovsky piece were superb; Mr. Milstein played the Lalo with silken sounds and a complete penetration of the sensuous nature of the work; and Dame Myra was utterly compelling in her interpretation of the Beethoven concerto. In answer to the stern questionings of the orchestra in the slow movement (rather too rude in Mr. Szell's imperious way of handling them), the piano whispered and sang with such poetic utterance that a bewitched audience paid tribute to the artist by a profound hush, after which an audible sigh went up as the music turned to its bright conclusion. This was indeed a memorable performance.

Mr. Szell was not the ideal accompanist for any of the three solo works, for he seemed impatient and in a hurry, and his square, uncompromising beat too often was at variance with the more rhapsodic nature of the soloists' emissions. The orchestra consequently sounded best in the Weber overtures, where the conductor's will was law and tempos could be strictly maintained and increased at the drop of a baton.

—Q. E.

Three Soloists Appear New Work by Gail Kubik

Little Orchestra Society. Thomas Scherman, conductor. Theodore Israel, violist; Frank Glazer, pianist; Robert Nagel, trumpet player; Cesare

Siepi, bass. Town Hall, Jan. 7:

Der Schwanendreher...Hindemith
Burleske...Strauss
Symphony Concertante for Trumpet,
Viola, Piano, and Orchestra...Kubik
(First Performance)
Act II of The Miserly Knight
Rachmaninoff
(First Time in New York)

Once again, Thomas Scherman had prepared a program that was completely unhackneyed. The principal novelty of the evening was interesting because it was so bad, and the other pieces were interesting because they were so good. Gail Kubik's Symphony [sic] Concertante [sic] was commissioned by the Little Orchestra Society and composed in Rome in 1950-51, where Kubik is a fellow of the American Academy. The composer was present to hear the world premiere of his work.

The style of this Symphony Concertante is as polyglottal as its title. It begins in a highly dissonant, rhythmically propulsive fashion that reminds one of the bold, bad music of the 1920s. There is a long piano solo that sounds like a small child enjoying a work-out with its fists at the keyboard. The trumpet and viola interject thematic twiddles, but for all its fussy energy the music follows no clear or persuasive line of development. The second movement consists of a long, monotonous crescendo with an ostinato figure in the piano that becomes as insistent as an aching tooth. Thematically it is of the utmost simplicity—and banality. The third movement begins like a rondo, but constantly wanders off into by-paths. At times it is as terse as the later Stravinsky; then it turns sweet, and sounds like background music for a sentimental Western.

This piece seemed to me to be a sort of laboratory experiment in which Kubik is trying out his creative imagination in various styles and directions. But, interesting and valuable as it may be to the composer, it sounded crude, chaotic, and curiously old-fashioned in performance.

Hindemith's Concerto for Viola and Small Orchestra, Der Schwanendreher, was composed in 1935. He explains the title as follows: "A minstrel, coming into the midst of a happy company, displays what he has brought back from afar—serious and cheerful songs, and finally a dance piece. He extends and decorates the melodies like a true musician, preluding and improvising as he desires and is able. This medieval picture was the inception of the composition." When Hindemith himself played the work with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony in 1937 it seemed a bit colorless, but this performance in a smaller

hall with a chamber orchestra brought out its wonderful richness of color and contrapuntal ingenuity. Mr. Israel played the difficult solo part beautifully, and Mr. Scherman and the orchestra gave their best performance of the evening.

The orchestral performance of Strauss's Burleske was slovenly and coarse in sound, and Mr. Glazer was often submerged. The fact that he did not have the piano lid completely raised may have contributed to the faintness of the solo part. He played the work intelligently, but without the ease and virtuosic sweep that are needed to bring out its full charm.

Rachmaninoff's short opera, The Miserly Knight, after a poetic drama by Pushkin, was composed in 1904-05, about the same time as his Francesca da Rimini. Both works were given in Moscow in 1906; and The Miserly Knight was performed in Boston on Dec. 2, 1910. The second act is a long monologue in which the knight gloats over his hoard of gold. Mr. Siepi sang an English version prepared by George and Phyllis Mead. The music is superbly dramatic, richly melodious, and sumptuously scored. It makes a tremendously effective concert piece, but if the rest of the opera is as good as this excerpt, we should hear the whole work in stage form. It calls for two baritones, two tenors, and one bass. Mr. Siepi's splendid voice surged through the climaxes of the scene with the utmost ease. His English was understandable, if heavily accented. It was a pleasure to hear him in music that gave him so many vocal opportunities.

—R. S.

Autori Conducts Philharmonic-Symphony

New York Philharmonic-Symphony. Franco Autori conducting. Clifford Curzon, pianist. Carnegie Hall, Jan. 10 and 11:

Andante...Geminiani
(Arranged by Gino Marinuzzi)
Piano Concerto No. 5, E flat major
Beethoven
Variations, Chaconne and Finale...Dello Joio
Suite from The Firebird...Stravinsky

Franco Autori, assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, replaced Guido Gantelli, who was prevented by an attack of influenza from conducting this and the Friday and Sunday concerts. Clifford Curzon appeared as soloist in Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, as he had been scheduled to under Mr. Cantelli, but the rest of the program was changed.

Both Mr. Curzon and Mr. Autori were under considerable nervous ten-

(Continued on page 24)



KEEPSAKES

After the first of the 1951-52 Community Concerts in Bridgeport, Conn., Rudolf Firkusny, pianist, writes his autograph for Loretta Dranoff (left); Mrs. Frederick R. Fish, president of the Bridgeport Community Concert Association; and Mrs. Herbert J. Barnsley, artist chairman for the group

METROPOLITAN OPERA

(Continued from page 5)

some of the stirring things Lucia has to say in other than a coloratura context. Unfortunately, the tones she produced this way were almost invariably rough and unattractive, devoid of legato potentialities, and frequently wobbly enough to obscure the melodic line. For high passage-work she reverted to her familiar technique, and she delivered an effective mad scene, although one marred by much effortful singing and a pronounced flatness on top tones.

Mr. Tagliavini, in fine vocal condition, did his best singing in the part of the opera that is really the least suited to his temperament and style. In the sextette and the passages immediately before and after it he sang with a good deal of straightforward force. Elsewhere he tended to cancel out phrases of real beauty with the most extravagant distortions of line and dynamics. His portamento knew no conscience, and he would break a long, fine-spun, almost excessively covered line with a raw, open blast of tone. Dynamic contrast is one thing; provincial bad taste is quite another.

By contrast, Mr. Valdengo could not be described as singing with any real dynamic variation whatever. Perhaps he occasionally reduced his volume to a mezzo-piano, but most of the time his vocalism was quite loud and rough, firm in accent but very sketchy in its indication of florid figures. His acting partook of the same general qualities.

Mr. Scott looked impressive and dignified (perhaps more dignified than a mealy-mouthed old bungler like Raimondo ought, except on traditional grounds) and sang with meaning if not with much conviction or personal force. His voice sounded overworked and unresonant a good part of the time. Mr. Carelli over-



Lily Pons as Lucia

drove his light voice in the marriage-contract scene, during which he kept nervously pumping at the hilt of his sword.

Miss Votipka was a wonderful Alisa, looking just right and singing with firm, well-focused tone in discharging her slight duties. Mr. Franke sounded satisfyingly sturdy as Normanno, but drew a black mark by indulging in some extremely busy and senseless skitterings during the second of the choruses in the first scene.

Mr. Cleva conducted with firmness yet consideration for the problems and desires of the singers, but his reading, although always vigorously alive, was prevalently coarse grained. Désiré DeFrère's stage direction was conventional and stereotyped, but not abysmally so. His problems were not made any easier by the settings, which are said to date from 1942 but look more like 1922 in condition as well as design. An oddly amusing problem for Lucia audiences at the Metropolitan is to determine just how anyone could have been drowned in the first-act fountain. It isn't even big enough to drown a determined cat in.

Zachary Solov contributed new choreography for the first scene of Act III, turning out a modest, tasteful dance pattern that combined Scottish and ballet movement pleasantly and efficiently.

—J. H., Jr.

La Traviata, Dec. 20

Licia Albanese, Paula Lenchner, Margaret Roggero, Giacinto Prandelli, Renato Capecchi, Alessio DePaolis, George Cehanovsky, Algerd Brazil, and Osie Hawkins sang in the season's fourth performance of La Traviata. Maria Karnilova, Tilda Morse, and Socrates Birsy were the solo dancers, and Fausto Cleva conducted.

—N. P.

Aida, Dec. 21

Kurt Baum sang his first Radames of the season and Frank Valentino his first Amonasro of the season in the seventh performance of Verdi's Aida. Mr. Baum accomplished his best vocal work in passages that required sustained, softer tones, although he made his entrance in the Nile Scene with accuracy and bravura. This scene was the best of the evening. The tenor's duet with Zinka Milanov, the Aida, and her colloquy with Mr. Valentino provided some beautiful moments. Otherwise the baritone was well routine if not exciting. Elena Nikolaidi sang superbly in the Judgment Scene. She had deepened her perceptions of the role of Amneris, and portrayed it with more feeling and nuance than she did at first. Others in the cast were Lubomir Vichogonov, as the King; Cesare Siepi, as Ramfis; Lucine Amara, as the Priestess; and

Thomas Hayward, as the Messenger. Fausto Cleva conducted.

—Q. E.

Fledermaus, Dec. 22, 2:00

Eugene Ormandy conducted this broadcast performance of Fledermaus, in which Regina Resnik, Patrice Munsel, Blanche Thebom, Maria Karnilova, Charles Kullmann, Brian Sullivan, John Brownlee, Clifford Harvuot, Paul Franke, and Jack Mann enacted familiar roles.

—N. P.

Rigoletto, Dec. 22

Two leading singers took on familiar assignments for the first time in the Metropolitan's new production of Rigoletto—Lily Pons as Gilda and Giuseppe di Stefano as the Duke. Miss Pons, as in her seasonal debut in Lucia di Lammermoor, looked attractive and moved with grace and assurance, if not always in accord with Herbert Graf's stage direction. Her singing, too, was assured, although not always fully audible and not frequently tonally attractive. She attacked the coloratura passages with spirit and vocalized them cleanly, slowing down the tempo to be sure of the notes. Her pitch was generally accurate except on tones at or above high C, which were usually flat.

Mr. Di Stefano looked a little on the lumpy side in his Renaissance costume and did not act with much point or snap. His voice sounded extremely well except when he squeezed it over the pitch, but he did not seem entirely sure of the notes.

The rest of the cast was familiar—Leonard Warren, Nicola Moscona (in splendid voice), Norman Scott, Thelma Votipka, Jean Madeira, and a standard lineup of courtiers. Alberto Erede conducted.

—J. H., Jr.

La Bohème, Dec. 24

Jan Peerce made his first Metropolitan appearance this season in the fourth performance of La Bohème. Licia Albanese sang Mimì for the first time this season, and Renato Capecchi was Marcello for the first time with the company. The cast also included Hilde Gueden, Cesare Siepi, Clifford Harvuot, Lorenzo Alvary, Alessio de Paolis, and Paul Franke. Alberto Erede conducted.

—N. P.

Lucia di Lammermoor, Dec. 25

An audience in holiday mood filled the Metropolitan for the season's second performance of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, on Christmas night. The cast was the same as at the first performance, with Lily Pons in the title role, Giuseppe Valdengo as Enrico, Ferruccio Tagliavini as Edgardo, Thelma Votipka as Alisa, Norman Scott as Raimondo, Gabor Carelli as Arturo, and Paul Franke as Normanno. Fausto Cleva again conducted. The vast majority of the listeners was obviously delighted with the performance, and since the same cast has been reviewed in these columns at some length the Christmas spirit can best be preserved by refraining from comment and wishing all the performers a very happy New Year.

—R. S.

Manon, Dec. 26

When Massenet's Manon was given for the third time this season, Victoria de los Angeles made her first Metropolitan appearance as Manon, in a cast and production otherwise unchanged from the two earlier representations. In both singing and characterization Miss De los Angeles' Manon was her finest accomplishment here—unless her Butterfly, which I did not see last spring, is better. Until now, the special acoustical problems of the Metropolitan Opera House had seemed to bother her from time to time. On this occasion, however, there was none

of the tentativeness, even the outright miscalculation of volume, that had marred her success in other roles.

From the start Miss De los Angeles sang freely, spontaneously, with an even scale from bottom to top, and with high notes (including a scintillant D flat in the ensemble in the gambling scene) that were uniformly brilliant and easy. Her French diction, along with Martial Singher's, was one of the few idiomatic features of the production. In the first scene her acting was a trifle gauche and overdone, as though she found it difficult to persuade herself that she was sixteen. (I have often noticed that really young artists are frequently self-conscious in parts that require them to be younger than they actually are.)

As the drama progressed, however, Miss De los Angeles was increasingly

(Continued on page 23)

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Ansermet Conducts

Boston Symphony Concerts

WE had not expected to hear Ernest Ansermet so soon again, but it was indeed pleasant to welcome him at Symphony Hall, on Dec. 14, as interim conductor of the Boston Symphony during the convalescence of Charles Munch. Mr. Ansermet had left bright memories behind him after his visit as guest conductor of the orchestra in January, 1949.

His initial program in 1951 also brought the American debut of Monique de la Bruchollerie, in Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto. This attractive French artist proved from the first pages of the score a keyboard master and a first-rate musician. The work is spectacular, although not music of the highest quality. But this performance had a good deal more than technical virtuosity. There was intelligence in the reading, a grace of phrase, and an exactitude of style that proved triumphant. Everything sang all the way.

Mr. Ansermet further conducted in this program—repeated on Dec. 15—Mendelssohn's Fingal's Cave Overture, Fauré's Pelléas and Melisande Suite, and Debussy's La Mer. The overture received a big, muscular performance; Fauré's work was delicate, clear, and luminous. But orchestrally speaking, the event of the concert was La Mer, now a warhorse for the brotherhood of baton virtuosos.

Mr. Ansermet, as we had discovered three years ago, is of the discreet-tempo-clarity-and-ordered-expression school. But he is not without fire, a fact proved anew by his resplendent reading of Debussy's wonderfully connotative score. Tonally, the performance kept well between the extremes of juicy thickness and of dry, X-ray delineation. Expressively the performance rose steadily in emotional tension.

In the third Tuesday evening concert of the season, on Dec. 18, Mr. Ansermet introduced as soloist the fifteen-year-old Michael Rabin, who achieved a relaxed and fluid performance of Mendelssohn's E minor Violin Concerto. Clearly, young Mr. Rabin is a musician of promise.

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the complete Mother Goose Suite of Ravel, and three movements from Stravinsky's Petrouchka made up the Symphony Hall program for Dec. 21 and 22. This was another example of supremely fine orchestral playing. What used to be known in the war years as the V-for-Victory Symphony emerged in a tense and somewhat personal interpretation, whose main characteristics were little ritards and other rhetorical devices, none of which did violence to the music. The whole Mother Goose (the Prelude and Spinning Wheel Dance were added to the more familiar five sections) just does not have enough variety to warrant so much time and attention. However, I had never heard Petrouchka done before with such refinement; force and drive were notably mingled with extreme neatness of detail.

Frank Martin's Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments, Tympani, Percussion and Strings was given its first Boston performance in the Dec. 28 and 29 program. With the memory of the composer's striking Petite Symphony Concertante in mind, I expected more from the newer work. Here there seemed to be less integration. While the solo winds might have been the nucleus of tonal and

rhythmic contrasts, they seemed to be engaged mainly in unrelated cadenzas, with only now and again an effective opposition of instrumental timbres. The music also is rather gloomy.

Zara Nelsova, who had appeared in Pop concerts and in one of the now defunct youth concerts, made her debut in a regular concert on this occasion, playing the Dvorak Cello Concerto. This Canadian-born artist of Russian ancestry is a tremendously good cellist, and what can be done for Dvorak's long-winded work she surely accomplished. The program began with a superbly-styled reading of Mozart's G minor Symphony, K. 550, and ended with Chabrier's Joyeuse Marche.

Many Bostonians had been looking forward all fall to Boris Goldovsky's production, with the New England Opera Theatre, of Tchaikovsky's Pique Dame. The opera had been heard here only once before, 29 years ago, staged by a Russian company.

But the recent performance, at the Boston Opera House on Dec. 9, in an English translation by Mr. Goldovsky and under the title of The Queen of Spades, was disappointing. The plain fact was that Mr. Goldovsky just did not have at his disposal the big and opulent voices, together with mature acting skill, demanded by the opera. The orchestra, too, while it played well and included several Boston Symphony men, was not large enough.

But this was better, nonetheless, than no Pique Dame at all. The principal singers were Phyllis Curtin, as Lisa; Helen McClosky, as the Countess; Robert Price, as Hermann; and Mac Morgan, as Prince Yeletsky.

Without the usual two performances of Handel's Messiah by the Handel and Haydn Society, the Bostonian Christmas would not be complete. This year they were given at Symphony Hall on the evenings of Dec. 16 and 17. Thompson Stone conducted. The soloists were Susanne Freil, soprano; Lillian Chookasian, contralto; Harold Haugh, tenor; and Chester Watson, bass. The performances ran along familiar lines and in every respect exhibited the society's usual competence.

Jan Smeterlin, a pianist greatly admired in Boston, returned to Jordan Hall on Dec. 7 after five years' absence in Europe. No pianist within my memory plays Chopin with the same blend of charm, grace, flexibility, clarity, and singing tone, and he gave Schumann's Carnaval as deft, glowing, and romantic a performance as ever I have heard.

Frederick Jagel, the former Metropolitan Opera tenor, now head of the voice department of the New England Conservatory, appeared in recital at Jordan Hall on Dec. 2. Much more than most of his operatic colleagues, Mr. Jagel is a musician who knows, appreciates, and can present songs admirably. His voice has darkened over the years; there is always a sense of effort in his tone production, and the voice is not capable of a wide variety of tonal shadings. But the intelligence and musical skill that go into his performances are considerable. He was excellently accompanied by Reginald Boardman.

Rhodora Buckle Smith, soprano, presented an unusual and attractive list of Irish songs at a meeting of the Eire Society in the ballroom of Hotel Copley Plaza on Dec. 2. Her voice is light, but she sings with skill and



NORSE TRIBUTE

Marks Levine of NCAC is given an inscribed loving cup by an eleven-year old member of the Singing Boys of Norway as they arrive for their American tour

understanding. Many of the items had been arranged by her husband, Warren Storey Smith, the esteemed Boston teacher, music critic, and composer, who talked illuminatingly about the various pieces.

Jan Peerce is to be credited with presenting a notably enjoyable recital as the third of the Boston Morning Musicales in aid of the Boston School of Occupational Therapy, in the ballroom of Hotel Statler on Dec. 12.

The glee clubs of Smith College, directed by Iva Dee Hiatt, and of Harvard College, directed by G. Wallace Woodworth, provided musical pleasure at Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, on Dec. 8. The high points of the evening were Vaughn Williams' Serenade to Music and Brahms's Liebeslieder Waltzes. Marshall Bartholomew conducted the Yale Glee Club in Symphony Hall on Dec. 16 in a concert to benefit the Yale Scholarship Trust of Boston. This is a well-disciplined chorus, but the program was too much on the light side.

Bostonian concert activity further included appearances by Cathlene Parker, mezzo-soprano, at Jordan Hall on Dec. 5; and by the New England Conservatory Orchestra, Malcolm H. Holmes, conductor, at Jordan Hall on Dec. 12, with Elaine Pinkerton as a capable soloist in Mozart's A major Violin Concerto, K. 218.

The first Boston Morning Musicales this fall, in aid of the Boston School of Occupational Therapy, brought the Boston concert debut of Astrid Varnay, soprano, on Nov. 14. The second, on Nov. 28, brought a fine piano recital by Rudolf Firkusny.

The Cambridge Collegium Musicum has presented its annual three-concert series of old music, at Sanders Theatre, Cambridge. The members of this organization—Erwin Bodky, pianist and harpsichordist; Wolfe Wolfinsohn, violinist; and Samuel Mayes, cellist—were assisted variously in a Bach program, Oct. 29; a Vivaldi list, Nov. 5; and a concert devoted to minor eighteenth-century composers such as Matthias Monn, Johann Christian Bach, and Johann Pfeiffer, Nov. 19.

Malcolm H. Holmes, dean of the New England Conservatory, conducted its student orchestra—an unusually good one this year—at Jordan Hall on Nov. 13. Marina Dorn, Chicago pianist, made her local debut on Nov. 14. The season's first concert by the Civic Symphony was given on Nov. 26, with Paul Cherkassky conducting Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, with Robert Menga as soloist, and Dvorak's posthumously published E flat major Symphony.

—CYRUS DURGIN

OPERA

(Continued from page 21)

swept up in it, and from the Saint Sulpice scene to the end her vocal coloration and her action were suffused with great pathos. Her telling delivery of her share of the Saint Sulpice duet gave the episode a musical and theatrical stature it has not often had hereabouts in recent years. More striking, perhaps, because her earlier performances had given less hint of this potentiality, was the exciting flair with which she delivered both *Je marche sur tous les chemins*, in the *Cours la Reine* scene, and the *Gavotte*, here placed in the Hotel Transylvania scene.

Giuseppe di Stefano's Des Grieux provided many moments of tonal beauty, but he continued to show few signs of any effort to find out what the role is about either musically or stylistically. Mr. Singher was in good form as Lescaut, but the casting of Jerome Hines as the elder Des Grieux remained one of the management's most inscrutable decisions. Fausto Cleva's conducting was again one of his less distinguished demonstrations, and the staging and investiture of the whole opera were as sorry as ever.

—C. S.

Cavalleria and Pagliacci, Dec. 27

Astrid Varnay, who had sung Santuzza once before at the Metropolitan, in February, 1951, returned to the role in this performance. While it was apparent that she and Hans Busch, the stage director, had had little traffic, she enacted the part with what might conventionally be called success. Possibly her action would have seemed less prima-donna-like and dry if her singing had carried a stronger theatrical impulse. But her tones were consistently poorly

focused, and the spread, tremulous sounds she emitted allowed the climaxes to evaporate, and robbed the score as a whole of color and immediacy. Jean Madeira, allowed to graduate from the role of Mamma Lucia to that of Lola, profited from casting that did not go against both her instincts and the physical facts of her youthful body, and carried off her brief passages with naturalness and vocal effectiveness. Mario del Monaco repeated his strong and intelligent, if somewhat overacted, Turiddu. Clifford Harvuot and Thelma Votipka completed the cast.

In *Pagliacci*, Renato Capecchi sang Silvio for the first time here. Abandoning his dangerous and growing practice of forcing his voice, he sang the cantilena of the love scene with taste and attractive inflection. It was apparent, however, that nobody had coached him adequately in the stylized action this production of *Pagliacci* requires. Max Leavitt, displeased by the present appearance of the piece he staged last year, had withdrawn his name from the program credits and the Metropolitan roster, and Mr. Capecchi was evidently left largely to his own devices. For the most part he got on well enough, but it was an unhappy notion to try to sit on the petite Chinese bench with Delia Rigal on his knee. Miss Rigal came closer to singing Nedda's music steadily and spontaneously than ever before, but she ruined her performance by in-crusting it with needless gestures and movements. The other old-timers in the cast were Ramon Vinay, Leonard Warren, and Thomas Hayward. Alberto Erede conducted both operas.

—C. S.

Lucia di Lammermoor, Dec. 29, 2:00

Lily Pons was again heard in the title role in this performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The rest of the cast was also familiar—Giuseppe Valdengo, Ferruccio Tagliavini, Thelma Votipka, Norman Scott, Gabor Ca-

relli, and Paul Franke. Fausto Cleva conducted in spirited fashion. Mr. Tagliavini sang so beautifully in some passages, notably in Act III, Scene 2, that it was disappointing to find him forcing his voice and pulling phrases out of shape in others. He imbued the scene by the tomb with real poignance. Miss Pons was more brilliant and secure than she had been in the performance earlier in the week.

—R. S.

Aida, Dec. 29

It is only infrequently nowadays that Leonard Warren sings the role of Amonasro, and his appearance in the part in the eighth performance of the season took on an aspect of novelty. He sang with full, rich tone and smooth, flowing line, and accommodated himself to Margaret Webster's stylized direction without sacrificing his own personal projection. Except for Cesare Siepi, as Ramfis, the rest of the cast was that of the opening night, including Zinka Milanov, Elena Nikolaidi, Anne Bollinger, Mario del Monaco, Lubomir Vichegonov, and Thomas Hayward. Fausto Cleva conducted.

—C. S.

Fledermaus, Dec. 31

The cast for this non-subscription performance of *Fledermaus* included Regina Resnik, Patrice Munsel, Blanche Thebom, Maria Karnilova, Charles Kullman, Brian Sullivan, John Brownlee, Clifford Harvuot, Paul Franke, and Jack Mann. Josef Blatt was the conductor.

—N. P.

Manon, Jan. 1

Victoria de los Angeles' singing of *Manon* is something that no one should miss. Her impersonation lacked the dramatic verve of Lucrezia Bori's *Manon*, but it had the same musical beauty of color and line, and the same virtuosic ease. Miss De los Angeles obviously understands the contradictory elements of *Manon*'s character, and she was better in the part, dramatically speaking, than in any other she has thus far essayed at the Metropolitan.

Giuseppe di Stefano just as obviously did not understand the character of Des Grieux, but his voice sounded disarmingly warm and vital during much of this performance. Nothing could be said in defense of the style of his performance yet there was real excitement in his singing, not merely in the loud passages but in the diaphanous pianissimos that he was able to spin out.

Martial Singher was again heard as Lescaut; Jerome Hines as the Count des Grieux; Paula Lenchner, Margaret Roggero, and Herta Glaz as Pousette, Javotte, and Rosette; Alessio de Paolis as Guillot; George Cehanovsky as De Bréteigny; Lawrence Davidson as the Innkeeper; Paul Franke and Algerd Brazis as Two Guards; and May Savage as a Servant. Fausto Cleva conducted the score in a style rather closer to Puccini than to Massenet, but he achieved an impassioned performance that had its virtues in spite of its vehemence and headlong pace.

—R. S.

Così Fan Tutte, Jan. 2

The second performance of the newest revival moved smoothly. A large audience, apparently disposed to admire Alfred Lunt's contributions as a mime and as the stage director, was enchanted from the moment the actor stepped before the curtain to light the footlights and shush the late-comers. Eleanor Steber as Fiordiligi, and Blanche Thebom as Dorabella looked handsome in their colorful costumes; Richard Tucker as Ferrando and Frank Guarrera as Guglielmo postured and grimaced with something less than elegance, and Patrice Munsel

(Continued on page 25)

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ORCHESTRAS

(Continued from page 20)

sion, but the performance gained an edge of excitement through that very fact. Mr. Curzon seemed most himself in the Adagio, where he spun the solo melodies with exquisite tone and shading. In the opening movement his tone was more percussive and his playing more hard-driven than usual, yet his noble conception was not wholly obscured by his nervousness. In the rondo he had regained a large measure of his customary impeccable



Clifford Curzon



Franco Auteri

rhythmic control and highly sensitive range of dynamics.

Mr. Auteri, one was happy to note, conducted the American work on the program better than anything else. Norman Dello Joio's Variations, Chaconne, and Finale won the New York Music Critics Circle Award in 1948-49. It is a deeply moving, structurally interesting work that should be kept in the active repertoire. Mr. Auteri achieved a delicacy of balance and an authority of interpretation in this music that he did not equal in the others. The composer was recalled to the stage by the audience, which left no doubt of its warm approbation of this unproblematic but eminently worthwhile music. Mr. Curzon, also, received an ovation after his performance.

—R. S.

Schiff Conducts Steinert Premiere

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra. Charles Schiff, conductor. Shimon Mishory, violinist. Town Hall, Jan. 12:

Symphony No. 33, B flat, K. 319
.....Mozart
Concerto, for violin.....Katchaturian
Concerto Grosso.....Bloch
The Little Hill.....Alexander Steinert
(First performance)
Toccata, from Le Tombeau de Couperin
.....Ravel
(Transcribed by Charles Schiff)

It took this excellent chamber orchestra most of the Mozart symphony to warm up, but the finale fairly bubbled. Mr. Schiff followed through with a bright accompaniment in the Katchaturian concerto. Even Mr. Mishory's first-rate performance could not make its commonplace interesting, but the Israeli violinist seemed to get more out of it than it has—if that is possible. He played it with faultless technical command, luminous tone, and musical finesse of the highest order.

The strong, firm lines of Bloch's Concerto Grosso provided a welcome respite between the tedious concerto and Mr. Steinert's The Little Hill, a Hollywoodian hodge-podge of no greater value than the doggerel children's verses that were said to have inspired it. The evening closed with the first performance of a none-too-successful orchestration by Mr. Schiff of the Toccata from Ravel's Le Tombeau de Couperin.

—A. B.

Toscanini Conducts Beethoven Program

In the last of his current series of four concerts with the NBC Symphony, Arturo Toscanini led an all-Beethoven program in Carnegie Hall

on Jan. 12, consisting of the Leonore Overture No. 2 and the Pastoral Symphony. The conductor was in excellent form, and displayed his usual penetrating understanding of the symphony, which has always been one of his real *tours de force*. The long, sweetly curved melody of the first movement, the winning quality of the winds in the second, the drama of the storm, and the sunny, peaceful conclusion were sensitively projected. The overture was played with great drama and passion.

—Q. E.

DANCE

(Continued from page 13)

of the goddess's abduction by Pluto and of Demeter's visit to the underworld to bring her daughter back to earth. The movement is based on Balanchine's neo-classic style, which Joffrey handles with more ease and invention than most of Balanchine's disciples do. The ballet is too packed with ideas and seems at times too busy, but it is the work of a first-rate talent.

As Persephone, Lillian Wellein was able to perform the difficult steps assigned to the role; Gerald Arpino made a lithe Pluto, and Deidre Stone was Demeter. Read Arnow's décor and costumes were handsome, and Robert Silverman had supplied a fine score.

Billy Hooks's modern-dance suite is made up of numbers that are imaginative extensions rather than literal interpretations of the stories in three popular folk ballads. The movement, economical, emotionally evocative, rhythmically sensitive, and smoothly patterned, was well realized by Bodil Genkil, Jessie Burchess, Jimmy Smith, David Wynne, and Frank Lemmon in leading roles.

The other works were lower in quality, but each had points of interest. Peter di Falco's brief Guaracho was expert and wholly charming. Si Lan Chen disclosed an eye for amusing detail in her loosely organized "Here Comes Everybody . . ." Negligible as a dance, Boris Runanin's The Becoming of Maturity offered some funny pantomimed comment on the fall of Adam and Eve. A Little Girl and the World, by Jane Binney, was genuinely touching in emotional content, not very satisfactory in form. Crandall Diehl's theatre piece, For Earth Too Quick, tells a sentimental story, using an Agnes de Mille formula of ballet plus stylized pantomime. The work's trouble is long-windedness and hackneyed ideas. The leading female role, quite well choreographed, was brilliantly danced by Barbara Bocher.

—R. E.

Salome

(Continued from page 4)

sulphur-yellow clouds that swept across the green moon gave an eerie tone to the whole series of lewd events.

Miss Welitch's Salome has never been more fascinating. Now that her voice had lost its earlier drive and weight, the visual and tonal aspects of her performance presented a strange, and peculiarly effective, conflict. I have always felt that her acting, for all its white heat from start to finish, represented Salome as too mature and wordily a woman. The very point of the story—her abrupt arousal from virginity by the (to her) irresistible figure of Jokanaan—seemed to me to be thwarted by her dominating air of experience, of foreknowledge of the end she wanted to attain and of the ready possession of techniques with which to attain it. This basic fault still remained. But the strangely pale yet utterly fresh naiveté of her voice as she now used it completely refuted the postulates

of her acting. The innocence and the adolescence of Salome were expressed in her voice to a degree that I have never heard from any other soprano. The diminishing and lightening of her voice may be matters over which Miss Welitch has had no control. But this is unimportant; she now truly sounded like Salome, and any loss of vocal sumptuousness and amplitude was a small price to pay for the greater credibility of her singing. It was best, therefore, to watch her performance in two compartments, and to try not to worry about the contradiction. Her acting, however wrongly keyed it may have been, was a marvel of resource and dynamic energy in its own right; her singing implied the kind of acting she might do if she revised her conception of it to match the quality and sound of her voice.

Miss Hoengen proved to be a vital and assured actress, a handsome woman, and a vocalist of assured skill. She had not the rich voice of a Branzell or an Olszewska to bring to the music, but her lesser voice was pleasing in texture, and she was every inch a musician. She took a lively part in the proceedings, and was disaffecting only when—rather too often—she resorted to semaphoric gestures as accompaniments to the emission of high tones. Set Svanholm was far more at ease than before as Herod, and made the tetrarch not only dissolute but handsome and worth listening to.

The most stirring individual per-

formance of all, except perhaps for Miss Welitch's, was that of Hans Hotter as Jokanaan, a role he had not sung here before. The commanding magnetism of his Flying Dutchman last year suggested the immense power that he now brought to control the situation, both as a singer and as a fanatic, denunciatory figure, in his colloquy with Salome from the rim of the well. One felt that Miss Welitch had at last found her match. From his unseen habitat at the bottom of the well his voice sounded out like a pronouncement of doom. Brian Sullivan was again a personable Narraboth. The rest of the cast, many of whose members were old Salome hands from two and three years ago, included Herta Glaz as the Page; Alois Pernerstorfer and Emery Darcy as the Nazarenes; Gabor Carelli, Thomas Hayward, Alessio de Paolis, Paul Franke, and Gerhard Pechner, as the Jews; Norman Scott and Lubomir Vichegonov, as the Soldiers; Osie Hawkins, as the Cappadocian; and Paula Lenchner, as the Slave.

Warren Joins Hurok Artist Roster

Leonard Warren is now under the management of S. Hurok. In addition to handling the Metropolitan Opera baritone's concert, opera, radio, and television engagements, Mr. Hurok expects to arrange his European debut.

Obituaries



BERNARD R. LABERGE

Bernard R. LaBerge, 60, concert manager, died in New York on Dec. 28.

Born in Quebec, Canada, he practiced law before entering the concert management field in 1921 in Montreal. In 1926 he moved to New York, where he established the concert bureau that bore his name. He became a United States citizen in 1940.

Mr. LaBerge brought to America many French composers and was among the first to present chamber-music groups and organists. Among the ensembles he brought here were the Pro Arte Quartet, Music de Guides, Belgian Piano Quartet, Pro Musica Antiqua, Pascal Quartet, Pasquier Trio, Paganini Quartet, Hungarian Quartet, and Quartetto Italiano. For many years he was Mischa Elman's manager, and the organists who have toured here under his sponsorship include Marcel Dupré, Flor Peeters, André Marchal, Gunther Ramin, Fernando Germani, and leading American players.

Last year he was awarded the Cross of the Knight of the Order of the Crown of Belgium, in recognition of his thirty years' service to Belgian art and artists.

He is survived by his wife, an organist professionally known as Claire Coci; twin sons, Bernard Emile and Philip Raymond; three sisters, Mrs.

Marguerite Gagnon, Rev. Sister Lydia, and Rev. Sister Marie-Phileas; and a brother, Dominique.

POWELL WEAVER

KANSAS CITY—Powell Weaver, 61, organist and composer, died here on Dec. 22. A native of Clearfield, Penna., he studied at the Institute of Musical Art in New York. His organ teachers included Dethier, Yon, and Renzi, his composition teachers Respighi and Goetschius. He served as an accompanist on tour, organist, choir director, and teacher. He has resided in Kansas City for the past forty years.

His compositions, some of which have been played by leading American orchestras, include Plantation Overture; An Imaginary Ballet; The Faun, a suite; The Vagabond, a symphonic poem; and Symphonic Poem, all for orchestra. His Fugue for Strings had its premiere in Kansas City in 1947. He also wrote numerous works for chorus, chamber groups, piano, and organ.

ELLIS K. BALDWIN

UTICA, N. Y.—Ellis K. Baldwin, 51, music critic, died at his home here on Dec. 27. He covered music and drama for the *Observer-Dispatch* and was the Utica correspondent for *MUSICAL AMERICA*. Besides his newspaper activities, he was a lay preacher.

MRS. CROSBY ADAMS

ASHEVILLE, N. C.—Mrs. Crosby Adams, 93, piano teacher and composer, died at her home here on Nov. 9. She began teaching at the age of 21, at Ingram University, LeRoy, N. Y., and later taught in Kansas City; in Chicago, where she and her husband established the Crosby Adams School of Music; and in this city. She was honored in 1948 with a life membership in the North Carolina Federation of Music Clubs.

PAUL KAUL

PARIS—Paul Kaul, 76, French violin and cello maker, who provided instruments for Pablo Casals, Yehudi Menuhin, and George Enesco, died on Dec. 31.

OPERA

(Continued from page 23)
as Despina again stole the show with her pert graces and funny impersonations. With John Brownlee as Don Alfonso to complete the sextet, the singers all gave of their best. Fritz Stiedry conducted.

—Q. E.

Lucia di Lammermoor, Jan. 3

As the Lammermoor bride, Lily Pons languished and maddened in the company of two Scots who had not previously appeared in this guise at the Metropolitan—Mario del Monaco, as Edgardo, and Renato Capecchi, as Lord Enrico Ashton. Mr. Del Monaco was a handsome and impetuous lover, more at ease vocally in moments of anger and stress than in the gentler strains of the first-act duet and the closing Tu che à Dio spieghi l'ali. In Donizetti's music his failure to achieve any semblance of a legato line was disaffecting; but, in compensation, his honest and lively belief in the dramatic values of the score made his performance a vivid and lively one.

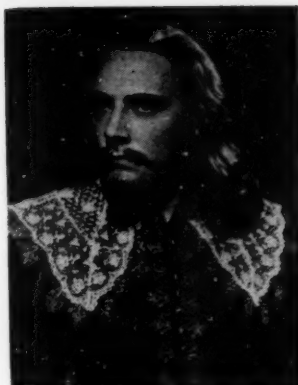
Mr. Capecchi, who sang well in his debut in La Traviata, had by now fallen prey to the fashionable and ruinous desire of Metropolitan baritones to make a great big noise. His voice was alternately tightly forced and spread wide open, and its sound was virtually never pleasant. He sang and acted intelligently enough, but the virtues of his interpretation were not sufficient to counterbalance the ugly sounds he made.

Miss Pons, in particularly felicitous voice, sang the mad scene as delightfully as I have heard her do it in a number of years. The tone was poised and pretty; the embellishments, scales, and arpeggios were clear and accurate; and every note, including the final high F at the end of each part, was precisely in the middle of the pitch. Thelma Votipka was again a superior Alisa. Nicola Moscona, also in fine voice, was a sympathetic Raimondo. Gabor Carelli as Arturo and Paul Franke as Normanno completed the cast, and Fausto Cleve conducted.

—C. S.

Le Nozze di Figaro, Jan. 4

Several changes in cast helped make this performance something less than perfection as far as accuracy, ensemble, and polish were concerned, yet it had its measure of spirit. In fact, for animation and a sense of alert-



Sedge Le Blang

Mario del Monaco as Edgardo

ness it was far ahead of the last previous presentation. Although they had had no stage rehearsals—and few of any other kind—Hilde Gueden as Susanna and Martial Singher as Figaro were decidedly on the credit side. The handsome soprano sang the role for the first time here, and the first time anywhere in Italian. Not as petite as many other Susannas, she was stagewise and graceful, and all she needed to be thoroughly satisfactory was more rehearsal. Under the circumstances, her vocalization was occasionally tentative, although it was always accurate in pitch, pretty in quality, and musical in phrasing.

The experienced Mr. Singher, appearing in his role for the first time this season, was a treasure as Figaro, for even if his voice was not always rich it was always serviceable and expressive, and his acting was as assured as any in the company. His was a busy Figaro, with a great deal of gesture and movement, but none of it was meaningless, and most of it was communicative and amusing. If this cast could stay together a few times, we might see a restoration of the stylish charm that formerly marked the production. As it was, there were too many slipshod moments.

Three other first times this season were Herta Glaz as Marcellina, Gerhard Pechner as Bartolo, and Genevieve Warner as Barbarina. They were all excellent, although the comic pair were somewhat more subdued than others have been. Miss Warner sang well and acted with the proper coyness.

Victoria de los Angeles as the Countess had a rather thin vocal evening, for although her art was as evident as ever, her voice was occasion-



Martial Singher as Figaro

ally threadlike and edgy. Mildred Miller was again a delightful Cherubino, and John Brownlee acted the role of the Count with his usual assurance and competence. A special word should be said for the comedy sense of Lawrence Davidson, as Antonio. Others in the cast were Alessio de Paolis, Gabor Carelli, Paula Lenchner, and Margaret Roggero. Fritz Reiner held the orchestral and stage forces together in the main with a firm grip and a propulsive spirit.

—Q. E.

Götterdämmerung, Jan. 5, 1:30

Recovered from the illness that forced her out of the last previous performance of Götterdämmerung, Helen Traubel returned to the role of Brünnhilde in the season's third presentation. The portion of her voice from high A down to the C a sixth below was ravishingly beautiful, but because she sang with less power than usual some of the big moments were unimpressive, and the lower octave at times tended to become inaudible. In the immolation music she sounded cautious and tired, as though perhaps she had not yet gotten her full strength back. Her entire performance seemed impersonal and aloof, more a distant comment on Wagner's music than a full participation in it.

Paul Schoeffler's Gunther and Set Svanholm's Siegfried were strong characterizations in a cast, unchanged from earlier presentations, that also included Regina Resnik, Margaret Harshaw, Paula Lenchner, Lucine Amara, Herta Glaz, Jean Madeira, Margaret Roggero, Dezzo Ernster, Gerhard Pechner, Emery Darcy, and Osie Hawkins. Fritz Stiedry and the orchestra gave a reading that was a model of tonal beauty and unforced eloquence.

—C. S.

La Bohème, Jan. 5

This was the company's 300th performance of La Bohème, and it looked it. The horseplay of the men was as raucous as ever, and the two leading ladies were largely left to their own not always adequate devices. Since Bidu Sayao postponed her first appearance of the season, Eleanor Steber again was Mimi, a role for which she is not especially well suited either physically or temperamentally, and which she sang on this occasion with tone that was almost continually tremulous, impure, and strained in sound. Patrice Munsel had eliminated a few modern musical-comedy solecisms that originally spoiled her characterization of Musetta, and seemed a bit farther along the road toward a satisfactory performance, especially in the last act, where she seemed wholly genuine in both song and action.

In the constant round of changing Bohème casts, Ferruccio Tagliavini returned for the first time this season to the part in which he made his

(Continued on page 27)

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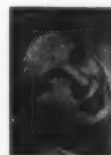
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IN THE LONE STAR STATE

Officers of the Houston Civic Music Association gather around Mimi Benzell, soprano, after her concert. Left to right: Hill Maury, Mrs. Russell Talbott, Richard Gilley, Mrs. Cecil N. Cook, Peter Brooks, Miss Benzell, Charles Crady III, president of the local association, Mrs. J. O. Hoard, James C. Winters, Mrs. Norris Meyer, and Mrs. Benjamin Bloom

NEW MUSIC REVIEWS

David Diamond's Sonata for Violin

David Diamond's Sonata for Violin and Piano (1943-46), now published by G. Schirmer, Inc., is a product of his felicitous period that produced such splendid works as Rounds for Strings and Third String Quartet, and it is in quite the same class. It is a work of fine lucidity and very special tenderness. Diamond, more than most Americans of his generation, has developed a musical texture and a *modus operandi* of his own. The Sonata, which is dedicated to Joseph Szigeti, is in four movements; the scope is big and the tension of the emotional line is established with real maturity. The violinist will find his part difficult, but rewardingly violinistic.

Bohuslav Martinu's Sonata No. 3 for Violin and Piano (Associated) is strangely unimpressive. Throughout its four ambitious movements, the sonata strives for the grand manner, but a really fresh page is rare. The writing for both violin and piano is stunningly idiomatic.

Associated has also published two smaller violin and piano works by Nicolas Nabokov — *Introduzione e Allegro* and *Canzone*. They are unassuming and entirely engaging, with much in the way of melodic and harmonic charm. The workmanship is impeccable.

—W. F.

New Vocal Compositions Of Varying Attractiveness

Among the recent output of English and American song composers there are several works that reveal both imagination and skill. Songs by Freda Swain, Leonard Rafter, M. Campbell Bruce, and Eric H. Thiman have been published by J. Curwen in London, and are available from G. Schirmer in New York. Freda Swain's setting for medium voice of a poem of incantation by Austin Clarke, called *Blessing*, has a haunting atmosphere. She has obviously been influenced by Peter Warlock, especially in her harmonic treatment of the sinuous melody, but she has put her own stamp on the work. Rafter's song, *The Huxter*, for medium voice, is palpably aimed at a light-minded audience, but as an encore it could be effective.

M. Campbell Bruce's setting for

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medium voice of Walter de la Mare's exquisite lyric *Snow* is sensitive, allowing the verbal rhythm to dominate the melodic patterns. Less felicitous is the setting of W. H. Davies' poem, *The Rain*, which has a trickiness that reminds one of some of Brahms's more contrived lieder without being as fine in workmanship. Thiman's *I Love All Graceful Things*, for medium voice, scarcely bears out that sentiment in its clumping phrases.

Robert Ward has composed a setting for medium voice of James Joyce's *Rain Has Fallen All the Day*. It is published by Peer International. The lyric is rather lush in sentiment, and so is Ward's music. Yet for all its conventionality of style it is appealing. Joseph Wagner's *Bewildered Ballad*, for medium voice, is a setting of a verse by Arthur Kramer that makes fun of lawyers; it will amuse those who like musical trifles. It is issued by Southern.

—R. S.

Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on Psalm Tune

Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on the Old 104th Psalm Tune* is a work for piano solo, chorus and orchestra; it has been published by Oxford University Press. It immediately suggests a similarly titled and scored work by Beethoven, but the resemblance goes no further than that. Vaughan Williams' work is cast in the form of a loose, rather rhapsodic set of variations, with the piano persistently in the foreground. The unusual twist, presumably, is the notion of a solo piano fantasy accompanied by a chorus as well as by an orchestra. The technique is, of course, masterful, but the work has the greater advantage of representing the composer at his affecting, incomparably honest best. This is a rich work and a lovely one.

—W. F.

Children's Piano Pieces Composed by Ned Rorem

It is good to find American composers writing piano music for the younger generation. Ned Rorem's suite, *A Quiet Afternoon*, is made up of simple one- or two-page pieces that have the harmonic freedom of contemporary music but remain well within the technical and intellectual grasp of young pianists. The titles of the individual sections are *A Quiet Afternoon*, *A New Game*, *The Little Boy Lost*, *The Little Boy Found*, *Lonesome Waltz*, *The Tiny Tin Dancers*, *Near the Strange Garden*, and *A Trick*. These pieces are pre-eminently lyric in feeling; piano students will have to use their imaginations to interpret them properly. The suite is published by Peer International Corporation.

—R. S.

A Flute Concerto By André Jolivet

Since flute concertos do not grow on bushes, the Concerto for Flute and String Orchestra, composed in 1949 by André Jolivet, is a welcome addition to the repertoire. It is published by Heugel et Cie. The slithering chromatics and supple figurations of the music make one think of a twentieth-century César Franck. The concerto lasts about thirteen minutes in performance. It opens with an Andante cantabile in 3/2 time that leads into a perky and extensively developed *Allegro scherzando* in 3/4. The brief *Largo* is carried largely by the strings, but the solo flute is brilliantly displayed in the finale, which is thematically related to the preceding movements. This music has a winning urbanity and polish, although it says nothing new or memorable.

—R. S.



COMPOSER AND SOLOISTS

Anahid (left) and Maro Ajemian, violin and piano duo, discuss with Lou Harrison his Double Concerto for Violin, Piano, and Orchestra, which was given its premiere in the sisters' Carnegie Hall recital on Jan. 11

Kubik Nocturne For Flute and Piano

Gail Kubik's *Nocturne for Flute and Piano* (1947) is a lean, highly concentrated work, the texture of which strongly suggests the more severe attitudes of Aaron Copland's *Piano Sonata*. The harmonic style is astringent, and the composer was apparently chary of too many notes; the flute line emerges as an unconvincing

compromise between the rather ascetic melos of Copland's piece and an understandable desire to write in the ornamental style that past composers have decided is characteristic of the instrument. For all of this, the work has a compelling intensity about it and—somewhat more than has been suggested—a life of its own. It is published by Schirmer.

—W. F.

First Performances in New York Concerts

Orchestra Works

Freseobaldi, Girolamo: *Four Pieces* (transcribed for orchestra by Giorgio F. Ghedini) (New York Philharmonic-Symphony, Jan. 3)
Kubik, Gail: *Symphony Concertante* for Trumpet, Viola, Piano, and Orchestra (Little Orchestra Society, Jan. 7)
Steinert, Alexander: *The Little Hill* (Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, Jan. 12)

Chamber Music

Harrison, Lou: *Suite* (1951) (Anahid and Maro Ajemian, Jan. 11)
Martinu, Bohuslav: *Serenade* for Violin, Viola, Cello, and Two Clarinets (Joseph Fuchs, Jan. 4)

Violin Music

Price-Romeicke, Margarette: *Cubhagita* (Margaret Pardee, Jan. 11)

Clarinet Music

Hindemith, Paul: *Concerto for Clarinet* (Herbert Tichman and Ruth Budnevich, Jan. 8)

Harpisichord Works

Persichetti, Vincent: *Sonata for Harpischord* (Fernando Valenti, Jan. 10)

Piano Works

Lasson, Guy: *Rhapsodie, Gloire a San Martin* (Guy Lasson, Jan. 9)

Songs

Broadnax, Eugene: *Message* (Embry Bonner, Dec. 29)
Honegger, Arthur: *Mimaquim* (Psaume CXXX) (Mary Ratoff, Dec. 27)
Mopper, Irving: *Poor Old Lady* (Embry Bonner, Dec. 29)
Poulenc, Francis: *La Fraicheur et le Feu* (five songs) (Mary Ratoff, Dec. 27)
Thiriet, M.: *Présents des Îles* (Mary Ratoff, Dec. 27)

Choral Works

Bartók, Béla: *Cantata Profana: The Enchanted Deer* (Robert Shaw Chorale, Jan. 6)
Mennin, Peter: *The Christmas Story* (Inter-racial Fellowship Chorus, Dec. 23)
Monteverdi, Claudio: *Magnificat*, for seven-part chorus, organ and orchestra (arranged by Giorgio F. Ghedini) (New York Philharmonic-Symphony, Jan. 3)

Opera

Rachmaninoff, Sergei: *The Miserly Knight* (concert version of Act II only) (Little Orchestra Society, Jan. 7)

Band Works

Arison, H. Lynn, Jr.: *Tone Poem, Israfil* (United States Military Academy Band, Jan. 5)
Milhaud, Darius: *West Point Suite* (United States Military Academy Band, Jan. 5)
Resta, Capt. Francis E.: *Overture, 100 Days* (United States Military Academy Band, Jan. 5)

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OPERA

(Continued from page 25)

Metropolitan debut. Lawrence Davidson sang not only Alcindoro, but also—a new part for him—Benoit, in which he replaced Lorenzo Alvary at the last moment. Rodolfo remains one of Mr. Tagliavini's best roles, for despite the crudities of Désiré De-frère's direction he acted it spontaneously and with a wealth of apposite detail. This time he did not sing particularly well, for he had a tendency to force his voice past the degree of volume at which it sounds best. Renato Capecchi, as Marcello, did the same thing; his voice could well be ruined unless he takes stock of himself. Mr. Davidson provided a workable if coarse-grained caricature of the land-lord. Others in the performance, conducted by Alberto Erede, were Cesare Siepi, Clifford Harvuot, Paul Franke, and Carlo Tomanelli.

—C. S.

Madama Butterfly, Jan. 6

The first Madama Butterfly of the Metropolitan season came as a Sunday evening benefit for the Mizrahi Women's Organization. Two of the leading roles were taken by familiar exponents—the title role by Dorothy Kirsten and Sharpless by Frank Valentino—with Giacinto Prandelli singing his first Pinkerton here. Mildred Miller was also new as Suzuki, as were Norman Scott as the Bonze and Algerd Brazis as the Imperial Commissioner, and Fausto Cleva conducted the opera for the first time at the Metropolitan. Alessio de Paolis and George Cehanovsky were familiar as Goro and Prince Yamadori. Désiré De-frère was the stage director.

The Metropolitan's Madama Butterfly settings are far from being new and were never supremely good, but this year they had been refurbished, rearranged here and there, and partly relighted. The changes, mostly minor, were all for the good, and the management had apparently found time to allow Mr. De-frère to rearrange some of the chorus movement for the better. Although the relatives of Butterfly still crouched behind their parasols in a phalanx-like semicircle while being introduced to the prospective bridegroom much of the other action had been somewhat clarified—particularly that surrounding the Bonze's entrance.

The only annoying innovation was a new galaxy of fireflies for the end of the first act. The oldtime lightning bugs were stationary—part of the backdrop it seemed—and went on and off in a monotonously regular pattern. The new ones are apparently attached to two long, flexible poles, which are moved up and down by stagehands behind the backdrop. For a while the darting effect they produced was very pretty and almost natural looking, but the poles themselves became more and more discernible as the stage lights were lowered, and the pattern of lights looked about as unspontaneous and incredible as before. Maybe the Metropolitan should try giving Madama Butterfly without insects.

But whatever the shortcomings of the production as it now stood, it could safely be said (without going very far overboard) that Mr. De-frère's Madama Butterfly looked much better than it has in recent seasons at the Metropolitan.

By far the finest individual achievement was that of Miss Kirsten, whose Butterfly was again one of the most completely—and intelligently—conceived and delivered performances to be seen at the Metropolitan. She was in really excellent voice, perhaps not as light and virginally pure as when she first came to the company, but warmer, richer, and capable of a perceptibly wider range of expressive

coloration. From her entrance (in which she elected not to sing the optional D flat) to her death she gave a performance so rich in meaning, so apposite in action, so freshly feminine, so moving in detail and in total effect that it could only be described as of the first class in every regard.

Only a few bits of business were disturbing—unduly nervous darting here, an unmotivated pose there. But why, since Miss Kirsten chooses to make her Hari-Kiri in full view, does she disconcert the audience by wrapping the white scarf around her neck after she has plunged the knife into her midriff?

Mr. Prandelli looked personable enough in his Navy whites and blues (somebody should get him to take the stripes off the whites and the shoulder-boards off the blues, though) and sounded better than he has in the other roles he has assumed here. His singing, always tasteful and musical, drew rich dividends from Puccini's orchestration, and no doubt from Victor de Sabata's coaching in preparation for the new Madama Butterfly at La Scala in Milan last spring. He was completely at home in the musical aspects of the role, and in the last act sang out with freedom of emotion that he had not shown here before. He was also at home on the stage—perhaps too much so, since his movement tended to be soggy and unemphatic. His lackadaisical acting was especially frustrating in the love duet. He just didn't seem very interested physically, and his concurrent lack of vocal punch cheated the climax.

Miss Miller was bright, attractive, and always dramatically believable as Suzuki (although it is a matter for debate whether so youthful a Suzuki makes as good a foil for Butterfly as does an older, more settled figure). She sang meaningfully and with beautiful tone that she blended sensitively with Miss Kirsten's. Mr. Valentino's Sharpless had its familiar merits of easy deportment and assured, authoritative delivery, but he was in exceedingly tight and unlovely voice.

Mr. De Paolis sang out cleanly as Goro and gave his usual marvellously detailed and pungent impersonation, and Mr. Cehanovsky was his usual sympathetic Yamadori. Mr. Scott's Bonze was something of a cipher. He did not deliver his imprecations with very much theatrical force, and he seemed under-rehearsed in the business of the part, making a lamentable botch of his exit. Miss Bollinger looked far too lovely to be the wife of a caddish lieutenant and sang her few lines as well as they ever are sung.

Mr. Cleva's reading of the score placed high on the list of his accomplishments at the Metropolitan. He kept Puccini's *japonaiserie* clean as a whistle, chose admirably singable tempos, and generally molded a performance of striking dramatic and musical values.

—J. H., JR.

Cavalleria and Pagliacci, Jan. 7

The season's fifth performances of last year's new productions of Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci brought no changes of cast. Zinka Milanov and Richard Tucker were both in notably fine voice as Santuzza and Turiddu, with Frank Valentino, Mildred Miller, and Thelma Votipka in other roles. In Pagliacci, the singers were Ramon Vinay (emphatically not in good voice), Delia Rigal, Giuseppe Valdengo, Thomas Hayward, and Frank Guarrera. Alberto Erede conducted.

—J. H., JR.

Fledermaus, Jan. 8

Regina Resnik, Patrice Munsel, Blanche Thebom, Maria Karnilova, Charles Kullman, Brian Sullivan, John Brownlee, Clifford Harvuot, Paul Franke, and Jack Mann played familiar roles in the season's seventh



Dorothy Kirsten as Cio-Cio-San

performance of Fledermaus. Josef Blatt conducted.

—N. P.

Madama Butterfly, Jan. 9

Fausto Cleva again conducted Madama Butterfly in its second performance this season. The cast included Dorothy Kirsten, Mildred Miller, Lucine Amara, Giacinto Prandelli, Frank Valentino, Alessio de Paolis, George Cehanovsky, Norman Scott, and Algerd Brazis.

—N. P.

La Traviata, Jan. 11

The fifth performance of La Traviata brought forward a new Alfredo in the person of Jan Peerce, making his first appearance of the season in the role. Although his performance had stylistic virtues, his voice was dry and unresonant most of the time, and he showed an unfamiliar tendency to make rhythmic and textual mistakes.

Licia Albanese, in the title role, had a superlatively good night once she had passed the ordeal of Sempere libera. Always emotionally authoritative in the role, she sang this time with notably great breadth and impact and with an impressive range of color and dynamic shading. When Miss Albanese sings with such freedom of impulse there are few Violettas indeed who can so move an audience. The rest of the cast was familiar—Renato Capecchi, Gabor Carrelli, Osie Hawkins, George Cehanovsky, Algerd Brazis, Paula Lenchner, and Margaret Roggero. Fausto Cleva conducted.

This was Miss Albanese's fiftieth Metropolitan Violetta—far more than can be claimed by any other active soprano in the company.

—J. H., JR.

Così Fan Tutte, Jan. 12, 2:00

The third performance of Così Fan Tutte was given on a Saturday afternoon and was broadcast. The new production went smoothly except for

(Continued on page 33)



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RECORDS

Tannhäuser and Other Operas In Recordings Made in Germany

In a prodigious holiday-season release, Urania has issued recordings of five operatic works, all complete or virtually so, and all sung in German by German artists. The most ambitious undertaking in the group is an uncut recording of Wagner's Tannhäuser, in the original Dresden version. Smetana's Die verkaufte Braut and Weber's little Abu Hassan are made available for the first time, as is also—in even lighter vein—the operetta Wiener Blut, pieced together like The Great Waltz from a variety of Johann Strauss materials. Humpendick's Hänsel und Gretel is performed in the original German, with Erna Berger as Gretel.

Like the company's previous releases of Die Meistersinger and Tristan und Isolde, Urania's Tannhäuser is a spotty job. Singers, chorus, and orchestra are members of the Munich State Opera. Robert Heger, one of the chief conductors of that opera house, gives an unexceptionable and often really sensitive reading of the score, and the orchestra plays with the ease and freedom that come from long and intimate knowledge of the music, if not with the greatest finesse or beauty of tone. Not all the individual singers, however, are the best that might have been provided. The most satisfying interpreters are Marianne Schech, an Elisabeth of considerable poetic imagination and lovely tone when her upper tones do not fly loose; Rita Streich, an exceptionally attractive Shepherd; and Otto von Rohr, a Landgraf possessed of sonorous tone and dignified musical bearing. Karl Paul, as Wolfram, is commonplace; August Seider, as Tannhäuser, sings wretchedly most of the time, displaying the entire catalogue of faults for which low-grade German tenors are notorious. In the recording the balances are not always proper, and sometimes they are very bad indeed. But the performance as a whole, despite its blemishes, is a real and authoritative one.

The Bartered Bride, performed on three discs by singers of the Berlin Städtische Opera under the direction of Hans Lenzner, is on the whole gratifying, lacking only a lightness of mood and brightness of pace on Mr. Lenzner's part that would have kept certain numbers, especially in the first act, from sounding logy. Traute Richter and Sebastian Hauser, as the lovers, sing freshly and spontaneously, and the contributions of Ralph Peters, as the stuttering Wenzel, and Kurt Böhme, as Kezal, are capital. Once again, however, the orchestra is sloppy and inadequately recorded.

Abu Hassan (which takes only a single disc) could hardly be a more insignificant work; it is not even particularly amusing. But such laudable artists as Elisabeth Schwartzkopf, Erich Witte, and Michael Bohnen try to keep the prattling score interesting, and Leopold Ludwig and the chorus and orchestra of Radio Berlin do their share adeptly.

Since it is a pastiche—compiled partly by Strauss in the last year of his life and partly by the conductor Adolf Müller after the composer's death—Wiener Blut is a less satisfactory piece than Die Fledermaus or Der Zigeunerbaron. But the score contains such familiar items as the Artist's Life and Emperor waltzes; and such Städtische Oper singers as Irma Beilke, Miss Richter, Miss Streich, and Mr. Hauser deliver the melodies ingratiatingly, under Mr. Lenzner's direction.

The Hänsel und Gretel recording is a fairly complete disappointment. Miss Berger was not in her best voice when she made her share of it, and the rest of the singing, while competent enough, is uninspired. Alfred

Rother's conducting is lethargic and mechanical, and even the dream sequence, which is hard to spoil, has little sentiment and none of its usual magic.

—C. S.

Puccini's Tosca In Modern Recording

With this release of Tosca, all the Puccini operas except Edgar, Le Villi, and La Rondine are available in modern long-playing albums. This recording is Westminster's first venture into the full-length opera field. The opera is well, if not brilliantly, cast; the conductor knows how to make the score at once theatrical and musical; orchestra, chorus, and soloists are thoroughly rehearsed; with only a few exceptions, the balances between voices and instruments are properly conceived; and the recorded tone is clear and lifelike.

All three of the principals display both an awareness of the traditions of their parts and good vocal and dramatic projection. Simona dall'Argine, as Tosca, warms up slowly in the first act, but her second and third acts are superb, and she sings Vissi d'arte with emotional breadth and vocal command. Scipio Colombo possesses both the vocal means and the sense of characterization to be an effective Scarpia. And Nino Scattolini, as Cavaradossi, is a cut above most tenors in his feeling for vocal line and phrasing. Argeo Quadri, the conductor, is, like the singers, a bit lacking in tension in the first act, but the rest of his interpretation is genuinely impressive. Although the opera was recorded in Vienna, it is sung in Italian, and even the German-named singers of secondary parts are at home in the Italian style.

—C. S.

Concertos

BARTÓK: Viola Concerto. New Symphony Orchestra of London, Tibor Serly conducting; William Primrose, violist. (Bartók Records). The posthumous Viola Concerto, like a number of the composer's other late works, is especially approachable, for it interposes no sophisticated technical or theoretical problems. Its speech is direct and its message is earnest and vital. Mr. Primrose, who has presented the concerto in many cities in America and Europe, plays it with consummate mastery and rare beauty of tone. The recording is spectacularly lifelike.

MOZART: Piano Concerto, D minor. Wilhelm Kempff, pianist; Dresden Philharmonic, Paul van Kempen, conductor. (Decca). A fine European pianist approaches the concerto from a musical vantage point closer to that of the late Artur Schnabel than of any other pianist known in America.

—C. S.

MOZART: Horn Concerto No. 3, F flat major, K. 447. Mason Jones, French horn; National Gallery Orchestra, Richard Bales, conductor. Motet, Exsultate, Jubilate, K. 165. Barbara Troxell, soprano; National Gallery Orchestra, Richard Bales, conductor. (WCFM). Mr. Jones plays the horn concerto with great gusto and bravura. It is one of the most beautiful works for the instrument that we have. Miss Troxell sings brilliantly in the motet, which Mozart composed in Milan in 1773 for the castrato, Rauzzini. The Alleluia is often sung separately, but it is far more effective when heard in its proper frame as a sparkling finale. Miss Troxell's tone quality is variable, but her technical control, accuracy of pitch and finesse of phrasing prove her a redoubtable Mozart interpreter. At the end of the first movement, she sings the tasteful cadenza composed by Richard Strauss for Elisabeth Schumann. Mr. Bales and the orchestra provide acceptable accom-

(Continued on page 29)

RECORDS

(Continued from page 28)

paniments for the concerto and for the motet. It must be admitted, however, that the playing is pedestrian in style and tonally rough.

—R. S.

PERGOLESI: Concertinos No. 1, G major; No. 3, A major; No. 4, F minor; No. 5, E flat major. Wintherthur Symphony, Angelo Ephrikian, conductor. (Westminster). These four Concertinos for string orchestra, out of a set of six, give further testimony to the graceful invention of the composer of La Serva Padrona, whose fluent and skillfully written instrumental music is only now winning recognition for the first time. Performance and recording are both excellent.

—C. S.

SAINT-SAËNS: Cello Concerto No. 1, A minor. Gregor Piatigorsky, cellist; RCA Victor Symphony, Fritz Reiner conducting. (RCA Victor).

SCHUMANN: Piano Concerto. Dinu Lipatti, pianist; Philharmonia Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan conducting. (Columbia). The late Dinu Lipatti was one of Europe's finest pianists. This recording makes one realize how great a loss to the musical world his death entailed. The playing is at once lyric and powerful, intimate and noble. One of Lipatti's outstanding traits was his ability to set a tempo and maintain it faithfully, while achieving the utmost flexibility of detail. His singing tone and shading also enhance the eloquence of this interpretation. The orchestra plays forcefully under von Karajan. The recording technique is not on a par with the best that has been achieved in the realm of the piano concerto, but the performance is so beautiful that one discounts the shallow sound and occasional hardness of quality in the reproduction.

—R. S.

VIVALDI: Concertos, E minor and F major, for strings; Concertos, C major and B flat major, for violin and strings. Orchestre Symphonique de Paris, Charles Bruck, conductor; Elliot Magaziner, violinist. (Polymusic). Four additions to the year's inundation of Vivaldi concertos, forthrightly but sometimes rather heavily played by the orchestra, with satisfactorily musical solo contributions by Mr. Magaziner.

—C. S.

A Historic Recording Of Lehmann's Farewell

At the intermission of her Town Hall recital on Feb. 16, 1951, Lotte Lehmann announced to her audience that, like the Marschallin in Der Rosenkavalier, she had looked in the



Lotte Lehmann

mirror and decided that the time had come for her to accept the inevitable verdict of age. This gracious and affecting farewell speech—with its tributes to Marks Levine, her manager; to Paul Ulanowsky, her accompanist; and to the audience that "gave me wings"—has been recorded, along with the entire lieder recital that surrounded it, on a Pembroke Record (actually two LPs) and enclosed in an album that contains documentary photographs and press testimonials. The occasion, as it is preserved for posterity, is moving and real; and Mme. Lehmann's singing, while it does in part justify her own dissatisfaction with her loss of technical facility, is as profound and communicative as ever. The album may be obtained from Farewell Recital Co., 43 West 51st Street, New York, N. Y.

—C. S.

American Indian Music From the Library of Congress

From the remarkable archives collected over the years by Frances Densmore of Red Wing, Minn., the division of music of the Library of Congress has issued a long-playing record of authentic songs of the Chippewa Indians, recorded, frequently under primitive circumstances, by Miss Densmore. In the near future, the library will release records of other tribes, also from Miss Densmore's fabulous collection. These recordings are a part of the library's constantly expanding catalogue of Folk Music of the United States and Latin America, which also includes large quantities of Anglo-American, Afro-American, and the Latin-American music sung by the folk performers themselves. The catalogue of these records may be obtained from the Library of Congress in Washington for ten cents. All records must be ordered directly from the library. The recording project is under the supervision of Duncan Emrich, chief of the folklore section.

—C. S.

Six Conductors Signed To Appear In Seattle Season

SEATTLE.—The Seattle Symphony opened its 48th season on Jan. 14, eleven weeks later than scheduled and with six guest conductors engaged to replace Manuel Rosenthal, musical director for the past two seasons, who was dismissed last October when immigration authorities prevented his return to the Pacific Northwest.

The eight subscription concerts in the Civic Auditorium will be conducted by Arthur Fiedler, Sir Thomas Beecham (two each), Alexander Hilsberg, Stanley Chapple, William Steinberg, and Gaetano Merola. Resident soloists were engaged, including Randolph Hokanson, pianist; Kensley Rosen and Frank Beezhold, violinists; and Eva Heinitz, cellist. For Mr. Merola's operatic concert three California singers were signed—Dorothy Warenskjold, soprano; Ernest Lawrence, tenor; and Stephen Kemalyan, baritone.

Four out-of-town concerts, including those at Tacoma and Olympia; three Standard Hour broadcasts; and six children's concerts complete the orchestra's schedule.

To celebrate the city's centennial, Greater Seattle, Inc., set aside \$1,000 for three awards in composition. Feb. 15 is the closing date for entries, which are being received by the Centennial Music Committee, Stanley Chapple, chairman, and are divided into the following categories:

(1) Prize of \$150 for a ten- to fifteen-minute choral work suitable for high-school festival chorus; open to composers resident or born in the Northwest. (2) Award of \$400 for a 45- to sixty-minute chamber opera, orchestrated for twelve instruments, preferably without chorus; open to United States residents. (3) First prize of \$100 and second prize of \$50 for a march for band; open to United States residents. Performances in Seattle of winning works are assured.

The Centennial Music Committee was active also in assigning a \$500 commission—to George Frederick McKay, whose Symphony—For Seattle 1851-1951 will be given its first performance in the Feb. 11 subscription concert of the Seattle Symphony, under Mr. Chapple's direction.

A second annual series of four weekly concerts was given by the Northwest String Quartet, of which Kensley Rosen is the founder and first violinist. Quartets by Walter Piston, Hilding Rosenberg, and Ralph Vaughan Williams, and a quintet by Joaquin Nin-Culmell were given Seattle premieres in performances marked by vigor, insight, and finish.

Two of several seasonal renditions of Handel's Messiah were particularly satisfying. One involving some 400 participants, sponsored by the Council of Churches, was conducted by Mr. Chapple; a smaller, but still musically, performance at the University Presbyterian Church was led by Milton Johnson.

Among the city's encouraging developments in music are an extension of Francis Armstrong's chamber-music series at the Seattle Art Museum, through help from the Music Performance Trust Fund of the recording and transcription industry; establishment of a sinfonietta at Seattle University, directed by Francis Aranyi; continuation of suburban concert series; and housing of the University of Washington's ambitious opera workshop performances in the remodeled university playhouse.

The workshop recently gave a rousing performance of La Serva Padrona, in which August Werner, a member of the university faculty, scored a success as Uberto.

—MAXINE CUSHING GRAY

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The **Blanche Thebom Scholarship Foundation** gave its annual \$1,500 award to Gladys Spector, 25-year-old soprano of New York. Miss Spector, a former scholarship student at the Chatham Square Music School, sang the role of Ariadne in Strauss's Ariadne auf Naxos at Tanglewood last summer and has appeared with the New York City Opera Company and the New England Opera Company. The judges for the final auditions of this competition, which were held in December, were Miss Thebom, Irving Kolodin, music editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, and Wallace Magill, production director of the Bell Telephone Hour.

The **Juilliard School of Music** will offer a special class in vocal repertoire taught by Povla Frijsch during its second semester. The class, which is being given through the Extension Division of the school, will begin on Jan. 28.

The **Music School of the Henry Street Settlement**, Grace Spofford, director, has announced the appointment of three new teachers to its faculty. Winifred Cecil has joined the vocal department, and Irene Rosenberg and Ella Goldstein are in the piano department.

Joseph Florestano has returned from London where he attended the world premiere by the Covent Garden Opera Company of Benjamin Britten's new opera, *Billy Budd*, in which Theodor Uppman sang the title role. The baritone, who studies with Mr. Florestano in New York, will sing other roles later in the season.

The **American Guild of Organists** is sponsoring a choral composition contest for members of guild student groups. The Canyon Press will give a \$25 prize to the composer of the winning junior-choir anthem, and the chosen work may be published. Contest details may be obtained from Robert Crandell, 350 Clinton Ave., Brooklyn 5, N. Y.

The **New York College of Music**, Arved Kurtz, director, presented advanced students in a program of works by Bach and Handel, on Jan. 6, as the second concert in its Great Masters Series. Warner Hawkins directed the program. On Dec. 16, Marilyn Dubow, a pupil of Mr. Kurtz, played a violin recital, accompanied by Otto Herz.

The **National Academy of Santa Cecilia**, under the auspices of the Council of Ministers and the Minister for Education, has arranged an international competition for violinists in memory of Arrigo Serato. Violinists who were not more than thirty years of age on Jan. 1 are eligible to compete for the three prizes—1,000,000 lire, 500,000 lire, and 300,000 lire. Applications must be submitted by March 31, 1952. Further information may be obtained from the Competition Secretary, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Via Vittoria 6, Rome, Italy.

The **Leschetizky Association of America** has announced that applications for its 1952 Debut-Recital Contest must be filed before March 15. Candidates must be citizens of the United States or Canada and must be between the ages of seventeen and 25. They must not have given a formal New York recital or have made a professional concert tour. Contest details are obtainable from Carol Robinson, 405 E. 54th St., New York 22, N. Y.

Oberlin College and alumni of its music education department will honor Karl W. Gehrkens, emeritus professor of music education, by dedicating the Karl W. Gehrkens Music Education Library on April 19, the educator's seventieth birthday. Funds for remodeling the library, which he started in 1917, are now being raised by his students and friends. Persons

wishing to participate in the project should write to Rose Marie Grentzer, Rice Hall, Oberlin, Ohio.

The **Pasadena Civic Music Association**, in conjunction with several music patrons, has arranged for Lotte Lehmann to conduct an eight-week master class in song interpretation, which will be held at the California Institute of Technology from Feb. 13 through April 2. Performing students, auditors, student auditors, and professional accompanists may enroll in the class, for which a few scholarships are being given. Richard Lert, musical director for the sponsoring association, will conduct a one-hour preparatory class before each of Mme. Lehmann's weekly two-hour sessions. Mrs. Davis Merwin is in charge of arrangements for the class, and inquiries may be addressed to her in care of the Pasadena Civic Music Association, 16 N. Marengo Ave., Pasadena 1, Calif.

The **University of Chicago** presented Maria Kurenko in a recital of songs by Moussorgsky, Stravinsky, and Prokofiev on Dec. 14. On Dec. 9 and 10, Richard E. Vikstrom conducted the university choir of 45 voices and 21 members of the Chicago Symphony in performances of Handel's Messiah that approximated as nearly as possible the first performance of the oratorio, which was given under the composer's direction in Dublin in 1742.

St. John's University, in Collegeville, Minn., presented two performances of Massenet's opera *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame* (given in English as *Our Lady's Juggler*) on Nov. 30 and Dec. 2. The cast of sixty, which was directed by the Reverend James Kelly, included members of the St. John's Men's Chorus and the Choral Club of the College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minn. The accompaniment was by the university Symphony.

The **Philadelphia Musical Academy**, Jan Szanto, director, has appointed Lorne Monroe, principal cellist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, head of its cello department. Mr. Monroe, who studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and at the Royal College of Music in London, will teach advanced courses and master classes. Margaret Barthel, winner of a 1950 Naumburg Award and a pupil of Charles DeBodo, gave a piano recital at the school recently, as did William Fairlamb, another of Mr. DeBodo's pupils.

The **Philadelphia Conservatory of Music**, Maria Ezerman Drake, director, presented a member of its voice faculty, Stella Ferrari, in a recital of songs and arias by Mozart, Mahler, Charpentier, Britten, and Barber, on Jan. 10.

The **New England Conservatory of Music** has announced that the Eleanor Steber Graduate Award of \$500 was given to Emmalina DeVita, soprano, on Dec. 7. Arthur Fiedler, Frederick Jagel, and Cyrus Durgin, music critic for the *Boston Globe* and Boston correspondent for *MUSICAL AMERICA*, were the judges. Miss Steber, a graduate of the New England Conservatory, established the award two years ago to help promising young artists as she was helped by scholarships there. Willabelle Underwood, winner of the 1950 award, made her New York operatic debut this season with the New York City Opera Company.

College Music Association Holds Two-Day Conference

BRONXVILLE, N. Y.—A two-day conference was held at Sarah Lawrence College by the College Music Association on Dec. 27 and 28. The opening forum, devoted to the teaching of theory and composition in the liberal arts colleges was led by Norman Dello Joio, Richard Donovan, and Richard Franko Goldman. Two panel discussions had as their subjects the function of music in the liberal arts colleges and the preparation of students for graduate study.

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St. Louis Hears Two Orchestras Present Concerts

ST. LOUIS.—Vladimir Golschmann observed the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Vincent d'Indy by opening the program of the fifth pair of St. Louis Symphony subscription concerts, on Nov. 16 and 17, with the Prelude to Act III of Fervaal. Aldo Ciccolini, the program's soloist, was heard in Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, for which Mr. Golschmann provided an admirable accompaniment. Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste was a success in its first local performance.

In later programs Mr. Golschmann presented here for the first time Walter Piston's Sinfonietta and Roussel's Third Symphony. William Kapell demonstrated his powerful technique in a crisp performance of Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini, and Szymon Goldberg collaborated perfectly with the orchestra, under Mr. Golschmann's direction, in a superb performance of Beethoven's Violin Concerto.

The orchestra's first Pop concert, on Nov. 18, conducted by Harry Farbman, had Jim Hayes as soloist. The baritone displayed a voice of ample power and rich timbre.

The Quartetto Italiano was the first ensemble presented in the Ethical Society's chamber-music series at Sheldon Memorial Hall, on Nov. 26.

The playing of the St. Louis Philharmonic was fresh and incisive in its first concert under its new conductor, Russell Gerhart, on Nov. 29. The program included Dvorak's Fifth Symphony and William Bergsma's Paul Bunyan Suite, as well as other works, and Mary Maddox's pleasing soprano voice was heard in several operatic arias and songs.

William C. Harder, baritone, head of the voice department of the Washington University department of music, presented an unhackneyed, excellently interpreted program in Graham Memorial Chapel on Nov. 28. Leslie Parnas, young St. Louis cellist, appeared in a rewarding recital at the Wednesday Club Auditorium on Dec. 2, under the auspices of the Artists Presentation Committee.

The opera workshop of Washington University, directed by Harold Blumenfeld, gave Pergolesi's Livietta and Tracollo and excerpts from five operas, in Brown Hall on Nov. 25.

Recitalists and touring groups who have been heard here recently include Gina Bachauer and Nicole Henriot, pianists; Ana Maria and her Spanish

Ballet; the S. Hurok production of Fledermaus; and the First Piano Quartet.

—HERBERT W. COST

Fort Worth Begins Opera Season

FORT WORTH.—The Fort Worth Civic Opera Association opened its season with excellent performances of Lucia di Lammermoor on Nov. 26 and 28. Singers included Graciela Rivera, Bruno Landi, Arthur Schoep, Norris Greer, William Hargrave, Sara Rhodes, and William L. Lewis. Karl Kriz was the conductor; Floyd Lisle, chorus master; Anthony Stivanello, stage director; and Emile and Marcel Robin, scene designers.

The Dallas Symphony, under the direction of Walter Hendl, appeared in an all-orchestra concert on Nov. 19 and with Jascha Heifetz as soloist on Dec. 3. The Jan. 7 concert scheduled a presentation of Delius' Sea-Drift, with Lehman Engel as guest conductor, the 100-voice Texas Christian University chorus, and Bertron Coffin, baritone soloist. The orchestra's local concerts are managed by Mrs. John F. Lyons, who also presented Ballet Theatre on Oct. 23.

The Fort Worth Civic Music Association has sponsored appearances of the Charles Wagner Opera Company's production of La Traviata, Ana Maria's Spanish Ballet, and Gregor Piatigorsky.

The Masters of Tomorrow series, under the auspices of the Fort Worth Junior League, in conjunction with Texas Christian University, presented Dorothy Warenskjold on Oct. 29 and the Quartetto Italiano on Nov. 21.

The university's school of fine arts held its annual Fine Arts Festival from Dec. 9 through 16. Handel's Messiah was sung by the choruses of Texas Wesleyan College on Dec. 16 and of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary on Dec. 18.

—DOROTHY NELL WHALEY

Naumburg Foundation Announces Annual Contest

Feb. 1 has been announced as the deadline for applications to the 28th annual competitions sponsored by the Walter W. Naumburg Musical Foundation. The contest is open to pianists, violinists, violists, cellists, and singers, between the ages of sixteen and thirty, who have not already had a New York recital reviewed by the critics. A Town Hall recital during the 1952-53 season will be awarded the winner. Application blanks are available from the foundation, 130 West 56th Street, New York 19.



FOX FESTIVAL IN DENTON

Oscar J. Fox, composer (second from right) appeared for the sixth time at Texas State College for Women in Denton when a program of his songs was given by Mary David, soprano (left), and Artells Dickson, baritone (next to her). John A. Guinn, president of the college, is at the right

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Milan

(Continued from page 3)

voice, however, was too light for the part, and he was quite unconvincing as an actor. Nevertheless, he sang musically, and he seemed to know what he wanted to do. Giovanni Fabbri was Bethune.

The one great improvement over the Florence production was Aurelio Milloss' third-act ballet—still of goodly length, but speeded up and cut to twenty minutes from the previous twenty-nine. Milloss had revamped the entire choreography, cut out extraneous numbers and characters, tightened up the movement, and cleaned up the dancing of the corps de ballet. Olga Amati and Ugo dell'Ara, the leading dancers, gave excellent performances, and Mr. De Sabata made the ballet music sound better than it is. The sets, designed by Nicola Benois, were cumbersome, and they cluttered up the stage and action unnecessarily. Nor were they convincing save for the small fleet of serenading boats sailing across the Conca d'Oro in the second act. The stage direction was negligible—a harsh thing to say after the fine job Mr. Graf did in Florence six months ago. Perhaps there was not sufficient rehearsal time, for it is not like Mr. Graf to allow slipshod, unmotivated, and sometimes downright bad acting.

THE following night at La Scala brought the Italian-language premiere of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (Italianized into *La Carriera d'un Libertino*), with several members of the original cast. New members of the cast were Mirto Picchi—the possessor of a fine voice, well suited to the part of the Rake, with a concise rhythmic sense, but not always able to hold the audience's interest; Cloe Elmo, as Baba-the-Turk, who turned in a sparkling performance—a real circus freak with just the right combination of vulgarity and dignity; Tamara Galmio, as Mother Goose; and Giuseppe Modesti, as Father Trulove.

The translation by Rinaldo Kueferle is in the best tradition of eighteenth-century Italian verse, for Mr. Kueferle is a literary scholar of some attainments. The main problem he encountered was the difficulty of translating English ambiguities into a language whose essential characteristic is complete clarity. What he has written scans well with the music most of the time, but one misses the perfect unison of the English original with the music.

The production had been livened up a good deal since its first showing at Venice in September. The stage direction of Carl Ebert was elaborated on by both Mario Frigerio and Chester Kallmann. The part of Nick Shadow was more clearly drawn. The gradual disintegration of Tom Rake-well was slowed down, and started in the first act instead of the last. And the brothel scene was dirtied up a bit, so that it looked less like a Lawn Club Dancing Class, although it was still a far cry from the Hogarthian original. The sets, although they were the ones used in Venice, seemed more plausible because they were better lighted. The chorus was much happier in Italian than in English, and sang with more precision and verve.

Particularly noteworthy was the conducting of Ferdinand Leitner, the regular conductor of the Stuttgart Opera, who did all the rehearsing for the Venice premiere and took over there after Mr. Stravinsky had conducted on the opening night. Mr. Leitner provided his singers with a subtle and careful accompaniment. No voice ever had to strain to be heard; he breathed with the singers, and seemed to have two eyes and one ear constantly onstage. His rhythm was exact; he did not distort or sacrifice any part or whole for a momentary

effect of vivid brilliance. Everything was neatly balanced and well paced. Mr. Stravinsky and La Scala were lucky to have so devoted a musician as Mr. Leitner in charge of this opera.

The original Venice members of the cast had a hard time relearning their parts in a new language. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, superb artist that she is, came off best, portraying the role of Anne tenderly, intelligently, and movingly. Otakar Krauss benefited from the changes in stage direction, but he sometimes seemed uneasy with the Italian text. His portrayal of Shadow was more servile and unctuous in the first two acts and more demonic in the last. A particularly fortunate bit of stage business in the graveyard scene was the extinguishing of the lantern over Tom's head by Shadow as he sang, "To reason blind shall be thy mind."

The Milanese audience was outspoken in its enthusiastic approval of Stravinsky's opera. The few in the gallery who disapproved of the work whistled singly but loudly after almost every scene, and invariably each demonstration evoked a wave of frenetic and defiant applause in defense of the opera.

ON Dec. 11, the Angelicum, a Milanese chamber-music society under the direction of Ennio Gerelli, gave Pergolesi's seldom-performed opera *Il Fratello Innamorato* at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna as the closing performance in the late autumn season. This performance was remarkable for the unusual verve and spirit of the cast, a quality that some of the more famous opera houses of Italy might well emulate. The group had obviously prepared the work with loving care and had tried to infuse life into its atrophying veins. *Il Fratello Innamorato*, originally a Neapolitan dialect comedy called *Il Frate Innamorato*, had been put into high Italian for better comprehension, and the reviser, Mr. G. Tintori, had colored the original orchestration of a simple body of strings by the addition of one flute and one oboe. The plot is a highly complex piece of eighteenth-century fluff, and the main reason for the success of the work was the carefully studied stage direction. The natural acting of the soloists, who delivered their recitatives masterfully but fell down badly when they came to the arias, did much to enhance an otherwise static evening.

In the title role, Juan Oncina sang much better than the rest of his colleagues, although his voice was too heavy for the music. His delivery of the second-act aria, *Ogni pena più spietata*, was given special acclaim by the highly critical Bolognese audience. The unit set of Silvano Tintori (the production was obviously a family affair) was thoroughly delightful and eminently practical for a traveling chamber-opera group.

The conducting of Mr. Gerelli was simple and straightforward, and he accompanied the recitatives on a makeshift harpsichord in an approximation of the style of the times. Most of the time the tone of the orchestra was rough and strident. The attacks were precise and neat, but the players seldom released any given note simultaneously.

Elektra

(Continued from page 8)

dramatic impact of the libretto. In his correspondence with Hofmannsthal (the letters are now out of print, but a republication is being prepared in Zurich by the Atlantis Verlag) he suggested to the librettist: "In *Elektra*, page 77, I need a long pause after the first cry of 'Orestes!' I will insert a gently tremulous orchestral intermezzo while *Elektra* regards the brother who has returned to her. I can have her repeat the words 'Orestes, Orestes,' stammering several times, and of the following, the words 'Nothing moves,' 'O let me see your

eyes' fit this mood. Could you not insert a few nice stanzas for me?" Hofmannsthal obliged him, and Strauss acknowledged the alterations with praise: "Your verses are wonderful and have already been composed. You are the born librettist, and this you should accept as my greatest compliment, because I consider it much more difficult to write a good operatic libretto than a good play."

It was Strauss who suggested that Aegistheus should be slain immediately after Klytemnestra, in order to maintain the straight line of the drama. In this important detail, Hofmannsthal also assured him of his compliance, and reduced the "double curve" in this scene to a "single curve," keeping *Elektra* on the stage almost uninterrupted, and requiring great mental and physical stamina of any singer who undertakes the part.

WHEN I finished my school essay, I mailed a copy to Hofmannsthal, asking him to peruse it. His handwritten reply, dated Vienna, Jan. 9, 1929, read: "Dear Mr. Breuer: I have found your essay upon my return, and it was very interesting for me to see how this work written so many years ago would reflect itself in the eyes of one of the younger generation. I am sorry I cannot invite you here as I usually stay only for one or two days in the city, and then so much is piled up before me that I cannot spare an hour. I shall also have to go to Western Germany for about six to eight weeks. But if you will call on me upon my return at Rodaun, [a small village in the southern part of the Wienerwald, near Vienna] where I live in the summer, I shall be very pleased. With kindest regards, Hofmannsthal."

I planned the visit for the summer, as he suggested. But I did not see Hofmannsthal alive when I arrived in Rodaun on July 18. With several hundred people I followed his coffin, as it was carried from the little country church to a last resting place in a peaceful cemetery.

Friedberg To Manage Smeterlin Appearances

Jan Smeterlin, Polish pianist, has been added to the list of artists managed by Annie Friedberg, as has Giovanni Bagarotti, Italian violinist. Mr. Smeterlin is making his first American appearances in five years.

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Naples

(Continued from page 7)

forgetting that her top notes were shriller than they perhaps needed to be.

The title role was sung by Gino Penno, who, according to Naples reports, had been hailed as "il più grande tenore del mondo" by Paris critics during his recent visit to France. Automatically suspicious of this superlative, so often and lightly bestowed, I was delighted by Mr. Penno's real values. He was the opposite of the legendary Italian tenor with all throat and no brains. His voice was not immediately overwhelming, for, appearing only in the second act, when his partners had had a chance to warm up, he was at first slow in catching up with them. The baritone register of his lower voice seemed to change abruptly when moving into the higher octave. But Mr. Penno soon found control of both his voice and the stage situation. He left no doubt as to his exquisite musicianship, complete intellectual grasp of his role, and sensitive vocal potentialities. His qualifications were so pleasantly compelling that the Parisian epithet ceased to sound objectionable.

The main baritone role is that of the Mexican prince Telasco, visually a cross between Nelusco and Amonasro and musically a cipher. Aldo Protti brought to this ungrateful part a beautifully rounded voice, impeccably utilized. Throughout the whole evening nothing really (short of the score) impaired the aural feast; and whereas the decorum of the San Carlo adhered strictly to the rule forbidding the repetition of a number, the chorus—in Naples as in Rome—earned a special accolade. The choral writing reveals Spontini's greatest musical assets. The setting is usually for five, rather than the usual four, obbligato voices. The composer makes his strongest impact in scenes like the very opening one, in which the massive chorus of Mexican priests is relieved by a desperate "addio" of Spanish prisoners; and if the contrapuntal mutiny of the Spanish army does not inspire fear it yet evokes an appreciation for the technical ease with which the voices are handled. The large chorus, prepared by Michele Lauro, sang with perfection and gusto, as if there still existed the old Aztec law that prescribed capital punishment for a wrong note. The orchestra, under Gabriele Santini, revealed by its delicate phrasing the great number of rehearsals that must have preceded opening night.

The high standards of the opera houses in Rome and Naples, coupled with their courage in performing out-of-the-way operas regardless of their selling value, made one wish to hear the remainder of the season. Rome promises 29 works, among which Puccini is represented only by La Fanciulla del West and Gianni Schicchi, as against an abundance of novel and rare operas, including Janáček's Jenufa, Moussorgsky's Khovanchina, Louis Gruenberg's The Emperor Jones, Franco Alfano's Sakuntala, Weber's Der Freischütz, Strauss's Elektra, Zandonai's Giulietta e Romeo, Bizet's The Pearl Fishers, Lino Liviabelli's Antigone, Massenet's Werther, Falla's El Amor Brujo, Lodovico Rocca's L'Uragano, Cilea's Adriana Lecouvreur, and Bellini's I Puritani.

Naples has announced 23 productions, among them Terenzio Gargiulo's Maria Antonietta ("novità assoluta"), Rousset's Padmavati ("novità per l'Italia"), Respighi's Bel-fagor, and Carlo Jachino's Giocondo e il Suo Rè ("novità per Napoli"); two performances by the American National Ballet Theatre; and, among better known works, such gems as Ravel's L'Heure Espagnole, Rossini's L'Assedio di Corinto, Bellini's Nor-

ma, Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande, and Monteverdi's Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda.

OPERA

(Continued from page 27)

an offstage chorus that lagged far behind conductor Fritz Stiedry's beat. Alfred Lunt was again on hand to appear at the rise of the curtain as a servant.

—R. E.

Aida, Jan. 12

Margaret Harshaw appeared as Amneris and Giuseppe Valdengo as Amonasro for the first time this season in the ninth performance of Aida.

A voice as opulent as Miss Harshaw's was a pleasure to hear in the role. It was solid in the lower register and rolled out effortlessly all the way up to the high notes. It was not as dark as it might have been, for the soprano coloration Miss Harshaw has been working toward in recent years offered insufficient contrast to Zinka Milanov's voice in the title role. She sang accurately and with excellent diction, and both musically and dramatically her characterization carried considerably more conviction than it had before. Whatever the value of Margaret Webster's direction of the part may be, Miss Harshaw had profited by following it conscientiously, and she brought to the Judgment Scene a very effective vehemence. A good deal of the time she colored the text more satisfactorily than in the past; but she also delivered too many crucial phrases as if by rote, weakening an otherwise improved and useful performance.

Mr. Valdengo's Amonasro was resonantly sung as long as his music did not go above D, and with Miss Milanov and Kurt Baum, the Radames, provided a particularly dramatic third act.

The production as a whole was a lively one. Miss Milanov, in excellent voice, sang and acted with—for her—such abandon that some of the tones flew sharp; but it was still a strikingly beautiful performance, roundly cheered by the audience. Mr. Baum's high notes were functioning brilliantly; Jerome Hines was again the Ramfis; Lubomir Vichogonov, the King; Lucine Amara, the Priestess; and Paul Franke, the Messenger. Fausto Cleva conducted.

—R. E.

Opera Exhibit Opens at City Museum

The Museum of the City of New York opened on Dec. 5 a winter-long exhibition devoted to the 23 operas in the Metropolitan Opera Company's current repertoire. Particular attention is paid to past New York productions. Costumes worn by twelve noted singers in roles for which they were famous, programs, pictures, stage models, and memorabilia are being shown. The material has been assembled under the direction of May Davenport Seymour, with the co-operation of the Metropolitan Opera Guild.

Lausanne Schedules Contest for Opera Singers

LAUSANNE.—The second Lausanne International Competition for Opera Singers will be held from June 2 to 7 next summer. It is open to professional singers born after Jan. 1, 1920. Applications should be made before May 1 to the secretary of the competition, Conservatory of Music, 6, Rue du Midi, Lausanne, Switzerland. Awards in each of six vocal categories include 500 Swiss francs, an appearance in a concert in Lausanne, and a possible invitation to sing in opera at the Lausanne Theatre during the 1952-53 season.

Nelli Sings Violetta In White Plains

As the first bill in a projected series of operas in the Westchester County Center in White Plains, Robert March presented Verdi's La Traviata on Jan. 11. The performance was distinguished by Herva Nelli's first appearance in the New York area in the role of Violetta. Miss Nelli sang both the lyric and the bravura passages of the role with dependable and resourceful vocalism, and needed only a stronger impulse of passion

to be wholly persuasive musically. She was unfortunately costumed and careful rather than spontaneous in her action, but her performance had the makings of a believable characterization.

Mario Palermo was an ardent but vocally rough Alfredo, and Stefano Ballarini was the Giorgio Germont. Anton Coppola conducted with poise and efficiency an orchestra much better than the average for such isolated performances. Lucien Prideaux and Lydia Arlova were the principal dancers in the ballet. An audience of good size attended.

—C. S.

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Guest Conductors Lead San Francisco Symphony

THE illness of Charles Munch upset the San Francisco Symphony schedule almost as much as it did that of Boston. For while Pierre Monteux was guest conducting in Boston prior to Christmas, Mr. Munch was supposed to be here.

The list of replacement conductors, which began with Alexander Hilsberg, continued with André Kostelanetz and Massimo Freccia. Mr. Kostelanetz conducted the program for Nov. 29 and 30 and Dec. 1, in which he was most successful directing Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, his own Roumanian Fantasy, and music from Kern's *Show Boat*. Less satisfactory were Berlioz' *The Roman Carnival Overture*, Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*, Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*—which did have some grace and charm—and Ravel's *La Valse*.

Mr. Freccia was guest conductor for three programs. That for Dec. 6 and 7 comprised the *Overture to Weber's Oberon*, Brahms's *Fourth Symphony*, excerpts from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, and Respighi's *Pines of Rome*. Both the Respighi and Prokofiev works came off well enough to fully compensate for the perfunctory performances of the German works.

Unexciting, if not dull, was Mr. Freccia's presentation on Dec. 15 of the *Bach-Weiner Toccata and Fugue in C major*, but the most that could be said for his performance of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* was that it was routine and uninspired, and there were mishaps and technical flaws in the playing. Eighteen-year-old Teresa Vannin made her symphony debut in this program, as soloist in the Bloch *Violin Concerto*. She played with an intuitive musicianship that held attention despite some inexperience and immaturity and a few technical shortcomings. Its ethereal quality recalled the performances of Yehudi Menuhin in his prodigy days. Her beautifully sensitive playing of the cadenza brought cheers from the violinists in the orchestra at the conclusion of the first movement.

Mr. Freccia also conducted a concert contributed by the musicians for the benefit of the Italian flood victims. Devoted wholly to music by Italian composers—Verdi, Martucci, Rossini, and Respighi—the program offered as soloist the young Italian coloratura soprano Anna Maria Alberghetti.

Mr. Monteux had a heartwarming welcome upon his return for the Dec. 20, 21 and 22 concerts. Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* again brought forth the warm tonal sonorities of which the orchestra is capable. Schumann's *Rhenish Symphony* was also conducted wondrously well. With Aldo Ciccolini as soloist, Tchaikovsky's *B flat minor Piano Concerto* scored its usual success. The pianist gave evidence of providing more temperament, tonal variety, and color than many young pianists of the virtuoso school.

On Dec. 28 and 29, Mr. Monteux gave a remarkably fine reading of Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony*. Schönberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*, performed in memory of the composer, proved fascinating enough to overcome the verbal antagonism expressed by some auditors at the beginning, and Debussy's *Clouds and Festivals*

were presented in Mr. Monteux's best style. Yehudi Menuhin's performance of the Brahms *Violin Concerto* was up to his adult standards, but it lacked the beautiful tone of bygone years.

The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet seemed inferior to the Sadler's Wells Ballet, which toured the United States last year, but the repertoire, décors, and joyous spirit of the youthful dancers, were admirable. Particularly noteworthy were Frederick Ashton's choreography for *Les Rendezvous*, William Chappell's scene designs, and Elaine Fifield's highly skillful dancing. The company had much talent, although insufficiently developed.

The Little Symphony of San Francisco, a new chamber orchestra, appeared under Spencer Barefoot's management in the Veterans' Auditorium on Nov. 28. Conducted by Gregory Millar and made up of young players from many parts of the country, the ensemble gave performances of an uncommonly high standard. The first program comprised a Cimarosa overture, Mozart's *Haffner Symphony*, Bloch's *Four Episodes*, the second of Milhaud's *Cinq Symphonies*, Respighi's *The Birds*, and Bartók's *Roumanian Dances*.

The California String Quartet made its entry into the San Francisco concert field with a program on Dec. 17 in the Museum of Art. The players—Felix Khuner, David Schneider, Detlev Olshausen, and Karl Hesse—all members of the San Francisco Symphony, seemed well matched and their playing well integrated. The program was devoted to Cherubini's *D minor Quartet*; Schönberg's *Quartet, Op. 37*; and Reger's *E flat major Quartet, Op. 109*.

The Griller String Quartet, now at the University of California, was heard to advantage in Mozart's *F major Quartet, K. 168*; Sibelius' *Voces Intimae*; and Beethoven's *F minor Quartet, Op. 95*, in a Museum of Art program.

Two events for children marked the holiday period. The San Francisco Ballet gave an excellent performance of *The Nutcracker* on Dec. 23, and one week later the Pacific Opera Company outdid itself in a matinee of *Hansel and Gretel*. Evelyn Tanner and Marni Nixon sang and acted intelligently in the title roles. Emogene Caldwell, the Mother; Francis Barnes, the Father; Eloise Farrell, the Witch; Eileen Baldwin, the Sandman; and Arline Whitver, the Dew Fairy, were others in the well-mounted production, which Arturo Casiglia conducted.

The San Francisco Boys Chorus and Raymond Manton, tenor, gave a program for the Spencer Barefoot Celebrity Series subscribers before Christmas.

Robert Watt Miller is once again president of the San Francisco Opera Association. He succeeded Kenneth Monteagle, who was elected to the post when Mr. Miller was called into service during the second World War.

—MARJORY M. FISHER

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HARTFORD, CONN. TIMES
Nov. 20, 1951

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COLUMBUS, OHIO DISPATCH
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